THE WORKS OF ELDER HORACE H. LEFFERTS

Contents

FOREWORD 6
ADAM 7
AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY. 13
A LOOK AROUND. 17
AMOS IV. 12. 25
A MYSTERY 28
APOSTASY 32
A WONDERFUL SWORD. 38
CAVE ADULLAM. 42
I CHRONICLES XVI. 22; PSALMS CV. 15. 46
I CORINTHIANS III. 16. 53
1 CORINTHIANS III. 17. 59
2 CORINTHIANS V. 10. 61
2 CHRONICLES 24:8-14 65
CHARITY 69
CHASTISEMENT. 76
1944 Delaware Association 81
CORRESPONDENCE 86
CORRESPONDENCE 2. 90
CORRESPONDENCE 3 97
CORRESPONDENCE 4 100
CORRESPONDENCE 5 103
CORRESPONDENCE 6 113
CORRESPONDENCE 7 117
DESOLATION – THE WORK OF THE LORD. 119

DIVORCE. 124
EASTER. 126
ECCLESIASTES XI. 1. 129
ENTERTAINING STRANGERS. 132
FREEWILL 136
GENERATIONS 140
GENESIS IX. 27. 144
HABAKKUK III. 7. 148
HEBREWS II. 8. 152
HEBREWS VI. 4-6. 157
HEBREWS X. 23-27. 163
HOSEA II. 14, 15. 171
INFANT BAPTISM. 177
ISAIAH VII. 14-16. 186
ISAIAH XI. 6, 7. 194
ISAIAH XXX. 33 199
JAMES 2.26. 204
JEREMIAH VIII. 22. 208
JEREMIAH XVIII. 1-4. 214
JOHN VI. 70; XIII. 27. 221
JOHN VIII. 32. 223
JOHN X. 16. 229
JOHN XIII. 36. 231
JOHN XIV. 6, 18, 19. 235
JOHN XV. 25. 241
JOHN XVII. 1-3. 244
I JOHN II. 1. 250
I JOHN IV. i. 253

2 JOHN 10. 256
JOHN'S BAPTISM VERSUS GOSPEL BAPTISM 261
JONAH III. 10. 265
I KINGS XVII. 6 268
2 KINGS XVII. 17 272
"LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF" 275
LUKE III. 17 278
LUKE XVI. 1-13. 285
THE MACEDONIAN CRY 290
MATTHEW XVI. 13-19 294
MARK XVI. 17, 18. 296
MATTHEW II. 6 301
"WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE?" (MATTHEW XX. 6.) 303
ISAIAH XXXIII. 19-21 310
MINISTERING GIFTS. 318
THE NAIL 325
NEHUSHTAN. 332
ONE HOUSE – MANY MANSIONS. 338
PRAYER 344
PROVERBS XVII. 17. 349
PROVERBS XXV. 11 353
PSALMS LXXXIV. 11, I2. 357
REMEMBER THY CREATOR. 360
REVELATION XIII. 8. 365
REVELATION II. 27. 368
THE PURE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE 371
THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN US 379

THE SABBATH. 383
SALUTARY 391
I SAMUEL 3.1 394
THE RESURRECTION, THE BETTER RESURRECTION AND THE FIRST RESURRECTION..... 397
2 TIMOTHY II. 15..... 406
"THE VERY ELECT." 413
WHEN DIVIDING BECOMES GREAT GAIN..... 420

FOREWORD

Who was Elder Horace H. Lefferts? We get the following information from RH Pitman's Biography of Old School Baptist Ministers:

Lefferts, Elder Horace H., of Warwick, N. Y., son of Geo. W. and Sarah P. Lefferts, who were members of Southampton Old School Baptist Church, was born in Bucks County, Pa., April 23, 1879. In his seventeenth year of age, while a student at the West Chester State Normal School preparing for the profession of teaching, he was given a sweet hope in Jesus, and four years later, December, 1900, united with Southampton Old School Baptist Church and was baptized by Elder F. A. Chick, the pastor, Elder S. H. Durand being ill at the time and thus unable to administer the ordinance. He was licensed to preach in April, 1902, and ordained June 5, 1903. In September, 1903 he was married to Miss Ella Adams, daughter of the late Elder William Adams, of near Covington, Ga. In December, 1905, he was called to the

pastoral care of the Old School Baptist Church at Warwick, N. Y., accepted in April, 1906, and moved there the following year where he still resides. Elder Lefferts was in September, 1908, called to the pastoral care of the churches at Frying Pan, Va., New Valley, Va. and Mill Creek W. Va,, all formerly served by the late Elder E. V. White and now (January, 1909) has under consideration this call. He is a young, zealous and gifted soldier of Jesus, satisfied with the doctrine and practice of the Apostolic Church and has served as Moderator of the Warwick Old School Baptist Association.

Guillermo Santamaria

ADAM

PAUL says in Romans v. 14, that Adam "is the figure of him that was to come," meaning that Adam is the figure of Christ. The Scriptures of the Old Testament abound with many figures of Jesus Christ, but Adam is said by Paul to be not "a" figure, but "the" figure, as though Adam is the definitely, satisfactory figure of Christ, as though while many figures dimly show Christ forth, yet Adam particularly and more clearly shows the character of Christ as no other figure in the whole Bible does. Some thoughts about Adam being the figure of Christ we would like to present for our readers' consideration if they will bear with us for a few moments. The follower of reason is not satisfied to take the biblical account of the creation of man as being the truth. The rationalist accounts for man's presence in the world, not on the ground that he was specifically formed of the dust of the earth, apart from the other animals, but regards man to have been evolved out of some lower form of the animal kingdom, possibly descended from the apes. Reason rather believes this than the plain declaration of man's formation as written in the first part of the book of Genesis. Faith accepts unqualifiedly and without reserve the record of God's

inspiration, and faith will never be able to persuade reason that reason is wrong until that one who is ensnared of his reason is rescued therefrom by the spiritual demonstration of God's truth within himself. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Faith no one can have until God imparts it to him, for faith is God's gift, and exercises one unto the belief of God's word. Faith exercises the one in whom it is implanted, and is not for the creature himself to exercise as he will. Therefore when this heaven-sent gift of faith is in lively exercise it brings the one in whom it is to believe that the worlds were framed by God's great word of might. Before the triumph of faith, reason succumbs in defeat. Faith does not establish itself by argument or rules of logic, it manifests itself in power that cannot be resisted. God needs no argument to establish his truth. Enough for him to say that thus and thus is so. When his word declares a certain thing true, faith accepts without demur and with willingness. Jesus did not need to argue nor to resort to reason to prove to Martha that he is the resurrection and the life. Enough for him to say to her, I am the resurrection and the life. When he thus said she knew it was so. His words demonstrated their truth within her by power, so that she was convinced he spoke the truth. The truth can be experimentally known only by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, never by clear argument logically unfolded. Therefore the spiritual reader exercised by God-given faith who reads the record of the creation, and of man's formation as given by inspiration in Genesis, is abundantly satisfied therewith, and accepts it for truth Without question. The reader who reads it in the light of human reason discards it as childish and silly. What better proof do we need that the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world?

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Creation of all things therefore was in the beginning, and was the beginning of God’s material manifestation of his power. Formation took place after creation, but all that were formed as their order came, were created in the beginning. Formation simply made manifest, or brought into evidence, all that consisted in the creation. Like the oak tree is a development only of what originally lay in the acorn, nothing more and nothing less, so formation brought out and made visible all that God created in the beginning. Thus, though man was not formed until the “sixth day,” he had already been created. “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” God had said, “Let us make man in our image.” Here is where We begin to see how that Adam is “the figure “ of him that was to come. Right here is where so many Bible readers go astray, not being able to see how and in what manner Adam is the figure of Christ. So many have jumped to the conclusion that Adam, being made in the image of God, that God is therefore somebody who looks like man, only on a grander scale. Many intelligent people think of ‘God as being somewhere off in space, possibly having, his abode on some one of the other planets (maybe in the sun), and picture him with eyes, nose, mouth, hands, feet, just like men have, only grander. This is entirely imagination, as we see it, and nowhere near the truth. Adam was not made in the image of God in that he was made a miniature-copy of God. That is not the thought at all. Let us see what the record says: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created be them.” Right here, in the fact that in Adam God made both male and female, we see the figure of Christ. Just as the church is the bride of Christ, and was in him before the world began, so Eve was the companion of Adam, and was in Adam when he

was formed from the dust of the ground, not having then any separate personality from him. Adam, the one individual, was made male and female; he and his bride were one in creation and formation. So Christ and his church are one. If you can tell when Christ began to be, then you can tell when the church began to be. If you concede that Christ is eternal, then you must concede that the church is and was eternally in him and of him. Now, further, while Adam was in this state, with Eve still in him, God put him under law. The law was given to Adam before Eve was taken from him. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This is the law given to Adam with Eve still in him, she not yet having any separate personality from him. Is it any wonder then that when the woman afterward disobeyed this law that punishment devolved upon the man? Is it any wonder then that the law looked for satisfaction, not to the woman, but to the man to whom it was originally given? Just so, the law of God given to Christ in eternity with his church still in him, and not yet manifested apart from him, which law the church afterward broke when given being in the flesh, this broken law of divine justice demanded satisfaction, not at the hands of the woman (the church), but at the hands of the man (Jesus Christ). This affords the real basis as to why Christ ought to have suffered in the flesh all the demands of the law thus to save his church from the law's penalty. The commandment came to the man, the man must obey. The law of God was concerned with Christ and with the church only as she was in him, therefore Christ must fulfill the law. None but the elect of God ever stood in this relationship to Christ, ever were bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Thus the law which Jesus came under when he was made of a woman, and which law Jesus fulfilled, this law never

concerned any but Jesus and his bride in him, so that the purchase price paid can redeem none but those held captive by it and who were previously the property of the Redeemer. "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make an help meet for him." Now we come to where God is shortly to give Eve a visible entity apart from Adam, yet still bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. So the time came in the purpose of God when God manifested his church in flesh and blood here in the world. The same church which was from eternity in Christ is now to be given a visible existence here in the world in the persons of men and women of Adam's race. Eve was still Adam, even after she was taken out of him; her nature was his and his life was hers. Just so, the church does not cease to be in Christ even though she is given an identity here in the world so that she looks to be apart from him. His life is still her life, she is still a partaker of his divine nature, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Vitally, Christ and his church are never separated, not even when she is dead in trespasses and in sins. The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and a rib was taken from him. The Lord made that rib a woman. From the fact that woman was taken out of the side of Adam, we see that she is the partner of her husband, to share equally with him, not being inferior to him. So the church is the equal of Christ in all things given them of the Father. All that is Christ's is the church's. She is with him an heir of God, and more than this, she is joint-heir with him: his equal in the estate of the Father. Eve was beguiled by the serpent and ate the fruit forbidden. She was deceived, the Scriptures tell us. When Adam followed Eve in the transgression, he was not deceived, he did it fully aware as to what the consequences of his sin would be. Here, again, we see Christ. When Christ came down from heaven and condescended to he made in human form to follow his bride in transgression, Christ was not deceived, but was fully aware of the suffering

and death it meant for him to undergo in order to redeem his bride. Even if Adam had not himself eaten the forbidden fruit, he still would have been a sinner just the same, for Eve's sin was his sin. Eve was but Adam himself, after all, and when she ate he ate, for was she not bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh? Further, was not the law given to man in the first place, and, not to the woman, except as she was in him? Then, it behooved Adam to follow Eve and be with her in the transgression, otherwise Adam could not have been the figure of Christ that was to come, and this was the great purpose that God had in Adam. Therefore the moment Eve ate, Adam had already sinned. Just so, when the church transgressed God's holy law, the penalty devolved upon Christ, divine justice looked to him to follow his bride in condemnation so as to redeem her. In all this there is not a shadow of substitution as we see it. Our courts of law here will not accept an innocent man in place of the guilty. The one that is guilty must pay the penalty. Infinitely more so, the court of God's divine justice will not put to death an innocent man for the sake of the guilty. Therefore, Paul says that Christ was made sin for us, who knew no sin. That is, that while Christ did not know sin in his own person, was not a sinner himself, yet the law of God required that he pay the penalty and die to redeem his people, for they were his property, chosen in him before the world began, and, more than that, they were his flesh and his bones and had received the law in him just as Eve had received the law in Adam, so that Christ must come under condemnation with her and die to redeem her; not as a substitute, but as being made sin for her, as being the Head and Surety of his church, her life and her nature. This being so, when Eve sinned Adam sinned. The moment the church sinned, that moment Christ became responsible for her transgression. Finally, in the end of the figure, God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." "As one of us." Which one of "us" had

Adam become like? He had become, not like God the Father, nor yet like God the Holy Ghost, so he must have become like God the Son. He had at last fulfilled the image of Christ that was to come when he had followed Eve in the transgression and his eyes had been opened to know good and evil. It was said of Jesus that he should know to choose the good and refuse the evil. Adam had become the image of this. Thus, Adam's being the image of Christ, or of God, begins with his being made male and female, and ends with his being with his bride in condemnation, having the knowledge of good and evil. All this it takes to make up the figure of the Christ that was to come. No other figure in all Scripture shows the vital unity of Christ and his people as does this relationship of Adam and Eve, their formation transgression and ensuing condemnation. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 18.
September 15, 1916

AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

THESE few thoughts on "free will" and these that we shall essay on accountability, are written at the instance of a friend of the SIGNS, who lives in Arkansas, and who does not wish her identity known. She says, "I wish the SIGNS might be printed weekly," and also, "I hear so much of free moral agency and age of accountability in this part of the world, I wish you would some time in the near future give your views of the matter through the SIGNS. You know it is just as essential to know what is not truth as it is to know what is the truth." We believe, too, that it is well 'to call attention to

error in order to emphasize the truth; the contrast of the two throws the striking features of each into bold relief. By the age of accountability, many Arminians mean that a child is not responsible for what it does until it arrives at a certain age, which they denominate the age of responsibility or accountability; if a child dies before it reaches this age it will be saved and go to heaven. If this is so, what a pity we did not all die while we were children. Such a doctrine would almost justify a parent in taking the life of its child to insure the child's eternal happiness. The mere act of growing up into manhood or womanhood would place one in jeopardy eternally if the dogma of accountability be true. Those who advocate this doctrine believe that all infants and little children are innocent, and therefore without sin, that they are not sinners. But David said he was con ceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and came forth from the womb speaking lies. If that be so, and the Bible says it is so, then David came into the world a sinner and stood in need of the sacrificial atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ the very day he first drew breath. But some who believe the aforesaid doctrine, while they admit the transgression of Adam, and that every child coming into the world is tainted with it, yet they make a distinction between what they call "original" and "actual" sin. That while the child is a sinner by virtue of the original sin of Adam, it is not actually a sinner on its own account, never having actually committed any wrongdoing itself. Parents who will stop to think a moment must confess, if they are honest, that they have seen the motions of sin in extremely young children. Who has not seen them show jealousy of other children? who has not seen them cry with rage and vexation? and who has not seen in manifold ways the appearance of things which we call "cute," perhaps, but which in a person of adult years would be anything but "cute?" The principle is the same whether in a newborn babe or in the hoary-headed man, it is all sin. The infant is not

merely a sinner by the original sin of Adam, but is actually a sinner every moment it lives and breathes. We do not like the distinction between “original” and “actual” sin, though many theologians make this difference. It is a distinction without a difference. As we said in a former. article not long ago, every one of Adam’s posterity was actually, as well as originally, a sinner in him. Every one of us was in the loins of Adam when he fell, and it was our flesh and blood and nature that committed the sinful act; we were as much to blame for it as he was. It was Adam that sinned, and we were Adam, so where is the difference between original and actual sin? But some say that even though the child is a sinner, the Lord does not hold it accountable for its sins until it reaches the age of accountability; that if it dies before it reaches that age it will be saved on the ground that it did not know any better. Now, Saul of Tarsus was not a child when he went about persecuting the saints, but he did not know any better, and verily thought he was doing God service. Did the fact that he, an adult man, did not know any better cause the Lord to hold him therefore not responsible? The Lord called him to account on the way to Damascus and judged him there. Although Saul had been acting sincerely, and to the best of his knowledge, he did not plead that as a reason why the Lord should be merciful to him. The Lord was merciful to him, but it was for Jesus’ sake and not for the sake of his not having known any better. We simply bring in this instance of Saul of Tarsus, not because he was a child, for he was a grown man, but to show that no one is ever saved on the ground that they do, not know any better. There is no plan of salvation in all the Bible that is founded on any such base as that of our ignorance being a means to it. If that were so, then ignorance would be a virtue and wisdom a vice. In other words, the idea of there being a certain accountable age at which one becomes responsible for his sins, means that a child needs no Christ to save it, as its own innocence is all-

sufficient to that end, but that Christ is the atonement for adults only. But Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," showing that he is the Christ for all his people, whether they be adults, children or infants. There is but one plan of salvation outlined all through the Scriptures, and that is salvation by grace. It is grace all the way through from first to last, from the very first moment we draw breath in this world until we pass out into the great hereafter. The newborn babe is in need of the same grace to save it from its sins, as much as the aged sinner needs that same grace for himself. We are sure our readers know of many instances where children of very tender years have been convicted of sin. If there is such a thing as there being a certain age at which one becomes accountable, then the Lord would not call any one to account or convict him of sin before he reached that age. But we know that conviction for sin has been experienced, as we said before, by the very young, and many experienced people cannot remember a time when they did not feel that they were sinners. Both Elders Gilbert and William Beebe were convicted of sin when mere boys, and there are many other instances which our readers will be able to recall within the range of their own acquaintance.

These thoughts upon free will and accountability are not exhaustive at all, but just such as came to us at this time. Much more might be said to the point along the same lines, but we have filled our space, and will desist. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 2.
January 15, 1916

A LOOK AROUND.

IT is well-nigh impossible for one to live in and pass through this lower world and not take notice, to some extent, of things going on about him. We feel impressed at this writing, rather than to present our views on some portion of Scripture, to look around and call attention to a few things being taught and practiced by the world that cannot fail to be of meaning to us who profess to be, and hope that we are, the church of the living God. Nothing ever transpires in either creation, providence or grace but bears some relation, direct or remote, to the welfare and good, immediate or ultimate, of those called according to the purpose of God unto eternal life. It is not necessary to be able to explain or understand how "all things work together for good" in order to believe it. Faith lays hold on all things of the Spirit which to the reason and intellect are inexplicable. We do with all our heart assuredly believe that everything that ever was made, everything that has ever existed, does now or ever will exist, is for the glory of God through Jesus Christ the Lord, and for the good of his people. Nothing however slight, however good or evil in our judgment it may be, ever occurs in the lives of men or histories of nations but fulfills the predestined purpose of Jehovah from before all worlds began. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Inspiration here assures us that not only were all things made by the Word, the Son of God, but they were also made for him, not against him, and that all these things consist by him. This matter of consistency shows that God did not in the beginning wind up the universe and start it going, somewhat as a child might do a mechanical toy, and is now simply letting it run down of

itself, merely letting it spend the momentum of its initial impulse. No, but he sees to it that all these things of diverse propensities originally created and made by him do "consist," that is, they "stand together" in accomplishing the purpose for which he designed them. Nothing can fly off at a tangent, or mix up so as to clog the wheels of something else, but each thing, however rebellious or contrary it may be of itself, and each thing, however good and excellent it may be, must bend to a common center. The omnipotence of God is the all-dominating force that compels all things to converge to a final goal: his declarative glory and the good of his people. "Every dark and bending line meets in the center of his love."

With this introduction we shall proceed with our looking around, and oven in those things which we shall criticise, which the testimony of the Scriptures shall lead us to condemn as being contrary to truth, we shall always remember the purpose of God, from before the beginning, is being fulfilled. first, as illustrating a doctrine which is being preached and contended for everywhere in the world, we note this from a recent New York paper: "The teachings of christianity look to the ultimate gathering together of all mankind in one great human brotherhood." This doctrine of the "brotherhood of man " is rapidly intoxicating the whole world, but all nations and individuals are woefully far behind in putting it into practice. The brotherhood of man is not taught anywhere in the Scripture. All men are dead in Adam, born in sin, shapen in iniquity and come forth from the womb speaking lies. The brotherhood of man consists only in being brothers in Adam, in sin, error and death. But those who contend for this doctrine say the whole of mankind is verging toward a unity of immortality, of peace and love. According to them, everybody is a child of God, and God is everybody's Father. How can this be when Jesus said exclusively to his chosen disciples after he had withdrawn himself from the multitude into a mountain apart, "After this manner therefore

pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven”? To none but his called disciples did Jesus give authority to claim God as their Father. No man can teach another to say, “Our Father.” To teach our little children at our knees to pray, “Our Father,” is to make hypocrites of them. The true church of the Christ will not, cannot, take the name of the. Lord their God in vain. They cannot take it in vain, because it is their right to take it, it belongs to them, they are called unto it, begotten of God. The world cannot take the name of God as Father; it is not given unto the world. Only by the indwelling of the Spirit of adoption, of sonship, can any man say, “Abba, Father.” in order to become the sons of God there must be a birth, and that according to the will of God, of the Spirit, and not of the flesh. Being born of him, made partakers of the divine nature, they have right to claim God as their Father, they lie not in so doing. God is the Creator of all men, he is not the Father of all men. The Words “Creator” and “Father” have a very different meaning. True, Peter does say, “Love the brotherhood,” but it is a far cry to say that by that he means, love the World. Peter expressly addresses the brotherhood as the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The brotherhood exists, therefore, only between those embraced in the covenant of election, sanctified through the Spirit, and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. This “brotherhood of man” meets with the approval of the world, because no one nowadays but a subject of grace believes in the total depravity of human nature, that “the whole world lieth in wickedness,” that “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” On the other hand, all but avowed infidels do believe that in every individual there is a spark of immortality, that every man has an immortal soul. This is not

true. He (Christ) “only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” No man has eternal life, immortality, only as it is the gift of God through Christ to him. All men are dead, born dead, live in death, pass away in death, unless quickened by the Spirit of God and raised from their death in Adam to life in Christ by the power of his resurrection. But while on every side men loudly proclaim this bewitching phrase, “the brotherhood of man,” they come far short of showing their faith by their works. The record of their daily deeds attests their selfishness and greed, not their unworldliness and brotherly love. It is as though God mocks the thoughts of their hearts in bringing into manifest confusion their counsels and deliberations. Many have been led to think, by the way people on every side have been talking, that the era of peace and good-will was literally about to dawn, that the nations of the earth were about to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks, were about to consign their vast and ingenious engines of warfare to the junk-heap, and to depend upon the “justice inherent in the breast of every man,” as they say, to settle all their disputes, when, lo, from the kingdoms oversea come the peal of drums, the roll of artillery, the thunder of cannon, as these so-called “brothers” fly at each other’s throats, thirsting for each other’s blood, in the most terrible conflict of nations the world has ever seen. What, now, about the brotherhood of man? Surely God brings to naught the cogitations of the wise. All goes to show that man by nature is in league with the devil, and new er will be anything else unless delivered from captivity to the “prince of the power of the air” by the grace of God in Jesus Christ the Lord. Christ, and he alone, can burst asunder the prison doors of hell, can break dungeon chains of innate depravity and corruption, thus freeing the prisoner from the law of sin and death, ushering him into the unspeakable glories of redemption and

justification, and making a new man of him. Not alone from Europe comes the voice of upheaval, but in our own America disturbing elements are at work. Are they the forces of construction or destruction? God only knows. Labor is jealously safe guarding its rights against capital, capital seeks to intrench itself against the multiplying demands of labor. Now and then burst forth in volcanoes of unable-to-be-suppressed feeling, riots, strikes and the like. Do they betoken a larger conflagration drawing steadily nigh?Old time religious convictions are being swept away. We speak here not with reference to the true church, but with regard to the world. Only a few generations ago America had a "form of godliness," even though she lacked the spirit of it. This "outward piety " served as a moral restraint, if nothing more. The popular "higher criticism" of this, our day, spreading from our colleges, universities and seats of learning, has permeated all conditions and ranks of society, unseating men's confidence in the inspiration of the Scriptures and in the reality of a future existence, turning the miracles of Jesus into more tables and myths, denying his virgin birth and his vicarious atonement. Such teachings, coming from men whom we have been accustomed to hold in respect, have torn the form of piety from those whose immorality was restrained by it. Men unblushingly avow their infidelity and skepticism, getting for it the applause of the crowd. The marvelous discoveries and inventions of science during the past two decades have turned the people's heads, and now everything, even the sayings and doings of the blessed Jesus, must be subjected to the scientific test, and are rejected as fit only for children and childish minds if they do not stand the test. Surely America is a land without God in the world as much as any other. The flaunting of wealth and luxury, its public parade on the part of the rich, arouse discontent and a desire to emulate in the breasts of the poor. The increased cost of living makes continually more irksome

and unbearable the tendency on the part of many to live beyond their means in order to keep in the race, as, for example, note those now running automobiles who a year or so ago could hardly keep a horse. The prevalence of divorce striking at the very root and seclusion of the home, books and magazines featuring articles that tear the veil of reticence from matters that our mothers and grandmothers were wont to conceal with becoming modesty, what effect, think you, is all this to have on the generation coming up? From the lowest to the highest ranks of our citizenship discontent, uneasiness, even if not rebellion, are plainly in evidence. What is the meaning of it all? Education nowadays busying itself with frills, foibles, and nonessentials, laying stress on knowledge and industrial training to the utter neglect of principle and nobility of character, awakening in the hearts of the young ideals impracticable of accomplishment, making them dissatisfied with their lot in life, causing them, to regard as old fogies and know-nothings all that went before them; what, indeed, is the harvest to be? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" The fruit will assuredly sooner or later make manifest the character of the tree that bears it. And, yet, we are told the world is growing better. We prefer to believe thus: "Tn the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." The depravity that was in Adam by nature is becoming daily more and more evident. Sometimes we are asked, Are not men worse to-day than they used to be? We answer: By nature, no; in outward manifestation, yes. Man's nature is today the same as when it was created; nothing has been added to it or taken from it since then. He is but acting out

what is in him, and his actions show how horrible his corruption has been all the time, even though at times restrained. The acorn is the oak tree in embryo. All that ever shall be in the mighty oak lies dormant and undeveloped in the seed. The succession of the seasons, the sun, the rain and the soil, put nothing into the tree that was not in the acorn; they but develop and cause to expand all the latent possibilities of the seed. So the onward march of the centuries, the rise and fall of nations, and all that we include in the expression, "the providence of God," cause man to unfold himself and. show what is in him, but they add no new principle to him, nor take any old away. We have to confess that in looking around at the scenes being enacted about us, there is next to nothing to be found calculated to cheer the hearts of those who hope in the "rest that remaineth." But it ought to make us glad, brethren, that this world is not our home, that here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come. How grateful must we feel that God in his mercy has not assigned us our portion here below, as he has evidently countless others; but that he has reserved for us an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away. True, if one looks intelligently and understandingly at the events that are current in the world, it will doubtless alarm the heart of his flesh, but be his hope and trust in the Lord he cannot but rejoice that God, his God, is reigning and ruling everywhere, bending all things to the accomplishment of his inflexible purpose. We are glad we do believe that God has to do, not simply with all "good" things, but with all "evil" things as well. There are not two gods, one having power over all good, the other having power over all evil. No, there is just one God, and he is true and living. He is the Father of all the brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is above all, and through all, and in them all. God and Satan are not two self-existent and co- existing powers. God alone is self-existing, self-sufficing, comprehending all things in his glorious

attributes. The devil, who is he? Is he a throne, a dominion, a principality or a power? We cannot fail to classify him under one of these heads, and, if so, he must be a creature of God, subservient to his will. Not one step can he take, not one act can he perform, except it be the purpose of God that he should do so. He can have no power over the church, the people of God, to hurt or harm them, except it be given him of their Father. How glorious, how comforting, how soul-satisfying is the knowledge to the child of God that his Savior and Redeemer is supreme; that nothing can ever pluck the redeemed out of the Father's hand; that Christ has put all things under his feet, and holds the keys of death and of hell; that when he opens, no man can shut, and when he shuts,none can open. Were we not assured by the God-given faith that is in us that all things are in his hands, that nothing escapes his all-seeing eye, that not the feeblest lamb strays beyond his protecting care, where would our hope and comfort be? There is one great comfort in looking around, and that is, we are made to see where our fellowship and love are; that they are not for the "vanity fair" in vogue all about us, but that the breathings of our spirit reach out for the unseen, the eternal verities of God. Now, dear readers, we commend all of you who love him in sincerity and in truth, to the constant care and keeping of him who alone is "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 18
September 15, 1914

AMOS IV. 12.

"PREPARE to meet thy God, O Israel."

This is not the whole of this verse as written in the Bible, but is two words more than is usually quoted when used by Arminians. The words, "O Israel," are always overlooked by those who tell dead sinners or unregenerate persons to prepare to meet their God. These words of the prophet are addressed to Israel, and to Israel only, never was such language used by the prophets in addressing the Gentiles round about them. In other words, it was elect Israel, the nation which God had chosen from among all the nations of the earth to be his peculiar treasure, these only were commanded to prepare to meet their God. The "prepare" was addressed to a prepared people, to the Israel of God. The preparation of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is of the Lord. These who have this preparation of the Lord within them, these only prepare to meet their God, and they prepare with the preparation already prepared in them. No man can work out his own salvation only as God works in him to will and to do of his good pleasure, so Paul says. On the same plan, no one of us can prepare to meet our God, only as the preparation is wrought within us by God himself. No man can work without tools to work with. The dead or unregenerate sinner has no capacity for activity in any spiritual direction, because he is dead. Before he can move he must be made alive, for life must precede all activity, natural as well as spiritual. Thus it would seem self-evident to any one reading our text without bias that it is Israel, and Israel alone, who are commanded to do this preparing, and they so commanded because they are already God's people, already chosen by him, and separated from the other nations, so that their preparing to meet him would be the consequence of God's previous choice of them and of his will

concerning them. Indeed, there can be no doubt as to this, because the words immediately preceding those we have quoted are: "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." This proves that God's will, and not their own will, is fulfilled in this preparing to meet him. It is 'because God's will is that they shall prepare that they are called to prepare, and God's will must be, and always is, done. Now, what is meant by their being commanded to prepare to meet their God? Is it to prepare themselves to meet him in heaven, is it to make restitution to divine justice for their sins against that justice? No, none of this, but "to meet thy God" in this case means to meet the fire, the pestilence and other calamities which God was about to bring upon Israel at the time then spoken of by Amos. "Our God is a consuming fire," and for Israel to meet God in this instance meant not to die and go to heaven, but to meet the fire which should consume away their dress. This any Bible reader can find out for himself if he will take the pains to read the prophecy of Amos which leads up to the words of our text, God had been sending dire things into Israel on account of their transgressions, but none of these things wrought repentance in them. He had sent want of bread into all their places, but they had not returned to him. He had withheld rain from them, but they had not returned to him. He had smitten them with blasting and mildew, the palmerworm had devoured their figs and olives, yet had they not returned to the Lord. Pestilence had been sent among them, so that their camps were filled with the stench of the dead, yet they returned not to the Lord. All these calamities God sent unto them, but they repented not. All this proves that external circumstances and providential occurrences will never work repentance in one sinner's heart, that repentance is a matter of grace inwardly, in the soul and not of outward acts or circumstances. Now, after the failure of all these national calamities to bring about returning to the

Lord, the call comes: “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” The day of the Lord is approaching, and they are called to meet it; none but God’s own Israel are ever called to meet this day. The people already prepared of the Lord are commanded to make ready for that day with the preparation already granted them. What is this day of the Lord? Let Amos tell it: “Wailing shall be in all the streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skillful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord.” Thus you see the Lord’s passing through them will bring about all this lamentation and woe. Very different from external calamities which could not bring repentance will be this passage of the Lord through them which will mean such lamentation and weeping. “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light.” “Shall not the day of. The Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?” Thus it may be seen what is involved in Israel’s being called (not invited) to meet their God. It was to meet this woe, this weeping, this darkness, this dread and awful day of the Lord, that Israel was called. This is the way their desire to see the day of the Lord will he answered. It will be in such a way as to almost drive them to despair. Thus will they prepare to meet their God, a very different preparation from what the world is preaching about, and a preparation which none but God’s called and prepared Israel knows anything about.

This is written by request, and with a desire to respond to our inquirer’s desire. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 7.
April 1, 1916

A MYSTERY

There was a mystery which was kept secret from the foundation of the world, “hid in God,” a mystery which was revealed to none of the sons of God before the gospel age, a mystery of which Paul alone of all the apostles was made a minister. This dispensation of the gospel was committed unto him, that whether he preached willingly or by constraint, still it had to be preached. Necessity was laid upon him, and there was a woe unto him if he preached it not. The whole work of salvation is a mystery, and no part of it can be understood with the natural mind. But there was a special feature of this great work of salvation which had been hidden until the gospel age, and this special feature of the work of grace was given to Paul to preach unto the Gentiles. It was for the Gentiles’ sake that Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and while there were twelve apostles unto the Jews, we, the Gentiles, have Paul, who is the thirteenth apostle.

This mystery of which Paul was made a minister he tells us about in his letter to the church at Ephesus. Now, the church at Ephesus was a Gentile church and Paul was a Jew. The same truth which was revealed in Paul was also revealed in these Gentile brethren. These Gentiles knew nothing about Judaism, and were strangers to that covenant which God gave Israel by the hand of Moses. This Mosaic covenant forbade the Jews to deal with the Gentiles. According to that covenant no Gentiles had any right to the feasts or the solemn assemblies of the Jews; they could not partake in the temple service, nor in any of the sacrifices or holy things. From all these the Gentiles were shut out. He did not have the oracles of God, he did not have the prophets, none of the types or shadows, was indeed barred from all the blessings and privileges of the Israelites. Consequently the Mosaic law

constituted a barrier between Jew and Gentile, it was a "middle wall of partition" forbidding intercourse and fellowship between them. It was a handwriting of legal ordinances enjoined upon Israel for their obedience, carrying with it blessings for the observance and punishments for the breach. But none of these blessings or punishments could ever be the lot of the Gentiles, for the Gentiles were never under the Mosaic law. If Jesus, therefore, were made under the Mosaic law he would be the Savior of none but Jews, no Gentile could ever benefit by the shedding of Jesus' blood.

When the Scripture says that Jesus was made of a woman, made under the law, it is not the Mosaic law which is meant, but the law under which Adam fell in condemnation, which fall embraced all the elect of God in Adam. This fall embraced both Jew and Gentile, for there was yet no difference between Jew and Gentile when Adam transgressed. The obedience of Jesus was not confined to the law of Moses, but his obedience was unto the law of God, of which law of God the law of Moses was but a faint shadow, portraying in the temporal blessings which fell to the lot of Israel the spiritual blessings which under the new covenant fall to the lot of spiritual Israel.

Indeed, literally, Jesus did not keep the Mosaic law at all. That law forbade any work whatsoever on the sabbath day, and Jesus did pluck ears of corn on that day. That law said, Honor thy father and mother, and Jesus never did honor Mary as his mother nor Joseph as his father. That law said that any man calling himself equal with God was a blasphemer and was to be put to death, and Jesus did say, I and my Father are one. All these, and other acts which Jesus did, were looked upon as literal breaches of the law. But in the spirit Jesus did keep the law, and fulfilled to every jot and little its spiritual import; but he did far more, he obeyed the law and the will of God, so that his salvation is not confined

to Jews, which it would have been had he obeyed merely the law of Moses, but reaches out and takes in both Jew and Gentile: all his people from the four winds of heaven and from the four comers of the earth, in every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue.

Thus we see that the Mosaic law comprised a "handwriting of ordinances" which was against the Gentiles, being contrary to them, because they were barred from the observance of it and from the blessings or privileges or punishments of it.

This Mosaic covenant made an enmity between Jew and Gentile. So when Jesus died it ended the old covenant. He took away the handwriting of ordinances, nailing them to his cross, thus abolishing the enmity. This expression, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity," and that other expression, "Having slain the enmity" by the cross, both found in the second chapter of Ephesians, do not refer at all to the enmity of the carnal mind and the mind of Christ, nor to the enmity between the flesh and the Spirit, but to the enmity between Jew and Gentile, which enmity arose from the makeup of the Mosaic covenant which excluded Gentiles from participating in it. This enmity, this old covenant, had to be abolished before Gentiles could come into the kingdom of God. This abolition Jesus performed by the death of the cross.

Resulting from this death of Jesus comes the revelation of the mystery kept hid from the foundation of the world, and it is thus: the church, or body of Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, are one in the kingdom of God. Having broken down the middle wall of partition Christ made of the twain one new man. The "twain" means two, and the two are Jew and the Gentile. Of these two he makes one new man, or one new body, the body of Christ. All are members of his flesh and of his bones, all fitly joined together, growing unto a holy temple in the Lord, builded through the Spirit for the habitation of his honor and glory. The children of God are not

destined to become perfect men and perfect women. No, never. The gospel holds forth no such promise, but we all shall, that is, all his people from among both Jews and Gentiles, shall ultimately come unto the one perfect man, and that one perfect man is the measure of stature of the fullness of Christ. We shall all become as we already are, molded into one body, the body of our Lord.

Paul says somewhere in writing to the church at Corinth, Ye are all one bread. No loaf of bread can by any possibility be resolved back into its original grains of wheat. Each grain and all the grains lose their separateness when in the loaf of bread. Just so, only infinitely more co, the body of Christ while composed of redeemed sinners of Adam's fallen race can never be resolved back again into the individual men and women whence it came. Now this is the mystery which Paul particularly refers to in his letter to the church at Ephesus: "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body (with the Jews), and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." This doctrine of the new man; that is, of the body of Christ, made of Jew and Gentile, a wholly new thing until the resurrection of Christ, that is the special dispensation which was committed unto Paul to preach. It was not in other ages made known unto the eons of men, but it is now in the gospel age revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

In come of the prophecies of the Old Testament, to be sure, there is abundant evidence of the bringing of the Gentiles to the light of the truth. Especially is this true of the prophecies of Isaiah. But that One body, or one new man, was to be formed of the hosts of the redeemed from among both Jews and Gentiles that both were to be quickened together with Christ and to be raised up together with Christ, and both to be made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ; we say all this had been kept hid throughout all the ages heretofore

to be revealed and made known in these last times, and was first made known in the ministry of Paul, the Gentiles' apostle, and was the special dispensation of the gospel committed unto him. This, the unity of the whole church of God in the one body of the new man, Christ Jesus, is the "unsearchable riches of Christ" which Paul says he was especially called to preach among the Gentiles. This oneness of Christ and his people, whosoever they may be in the flesh, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, Greek or barbarian, is the gist and kernel of the whole gospel matter. It is the fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined, on which God feasts his children in his holy mount.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Nov. 1, 1920
(We question if Paul was the 13th Apostle. Ed.)

Republished – Signs of the Times
Volume 151, No. 1
January 1983

APOSTASY

This article has to do with those who, though they have once known the way of salvation, fall away from the first principles of their profession and become renegades, so far as the faith of God's elect is concerned. An apostate is one who ceases to walk in conformity with the principles of doctrine he once believed, and so falls away. As a basis for what we shall write, we want to use the second chapter of second Peter, which gives as good a description of apostasy from the doctrine, faith and order of the apostles as can be found anywhere in the New Testament. It is impossible for any child of God to fall away from the covenant of election which was made in Christ Jesus before the world began. Once in the love of God, always in the love of God. There cannot

possibly be any apostasy so far as one's falling, out of the hand of God and being finally lost. Not a drop of Jesus' blood was shed in vain. All that the Father gave him shall certainly come to him, and there is no power sufficiently able to pluck one of them out of the Father's hand. This is proved by the line of thought in the sixth chapter of Hebrews, where it is shown that if it were possible for any of God's people to fall away from God the only way they could be renewed again to repentance would be for the Son of God to be crucified anew for them. This could not be, because such a repetition of the crucifixion of the Son of God would be putting him to shame, in that it would be a confession on his part that the work which he did the first time was not satisfactory, or was not perfect enough to eternally secure those given him to redeem. Thus, inasmuch as it is impossible for Christ to be crucified afresh, just so it is impossible for the redeemed to ever fall away so as to be finally lost. But the second epistle of Peter, especially the second chapter thereof, treats of the falling away of those who depart from the principles they once professed to believe, and though they are still the children of God, and cannot· ever be cast away so as to be finally lost from Jesus Christ, they do in this earthly life become followers after their own lusts, or become bewitched of their own theories and opinions so far as to preach for doctrines their own inventions, thus departing from the old paths of apostolic doctrine and order which they once professed. All such characters are anathema to the true church, and are not to be fellowshipped by those professing the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The gospel procedure of the church of God as set forth by Christ and the apostles condemns all such, and they are not to be received into our houses, neither are we to bid them godspeed, lest we, too, be partakers of their evil deeds. We cannot understand how any one can read the second chapter of second Peter and conclude that these false teachers are not

children of God. The description of them given in this chapter cannot be made to fit any but those who have once known the way of salvation but have fallen away from the professed faith which rightly becomes those who walk in that way. In the first verse, these false teachers are to secretly bring in among the saints awful heresies, even going so far as to deny the Lord that bought them. This shows clearly that the Lord bought them; that is, had redeemed them with his own blood, but that they afterward denied him. If the Lord ever bought any with his own blood except those chosen in him before the world began, we have never seen it anywhere in Scripture; and we believe Christ suffered for the elect only, therefore these must have been among the elect. By bringing into the church these heresies, these who forget and deny the Lord who bought them bring destruction on themselves; that is, they bring upon themselves the swift judgment of those who desire to continue steadfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and become destroyed to the love and fellowship of the church here in the world. We have not time and space to comment upon each one of the verses in this chapter, but our readers will note that Peter described the safety of the true church in the midst of these false teachers by showing how Noah was saved from the wickedness of the antediluvian world, and how Lot was delivered from the wickedness of Sodom and. Gomorrah. Just so will God spare his remnant now in these latter days when the little flock is so terribly beset with apostate men who have fallen away from the advocacy of the principles which they once Professed, and have gone after their own vain traditions and imaginations. Just as God in the old dispensation was determined that his servant David should always have a light before him in Jerusalem, and so spared Judah from the general falling away which befell Israel, so now God has purposed that the spiritual David, Jesus Christ, shall until the end of time have a remnant loyal to him, even

though they be scattered and peeled. It is not to be wondered at that some fall away from the gospel order and principles, the great wonder is that all of us do not fall away, and that any are left to hold aloft the banner of truth, for surely were it not for the grace of God there would be no steadfastness in any one anywhere. These apostates are called in the thirteenth verse "spots" and "blemishes," and sport with their own deceptions, even while they associate with the children of sound doctrine and order, their deceptions not yet being uncovered sufficiently to bring down upon their heads the swift destruction which shall cut them off from the fellowship of the church. In the fourteenth verse these who fall away are called "cursed children." Children, therefore, even yet, but children under condemnation, for "cursed" means "condemned." These are under condemnation, not by the law of Moses, nor yet by the law of sin and death, but are condemned by that law of Jesus Christ which dictates the order and doctrine of the church here in the world. Every principle of gospel doctrine cuts off from fellowship with the visible church all who fall away from following in the principles of that doctrine, and all who disobey the order of God's house. Coming down to the twentieth verse, we find that the children of God, even though they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, do sometimes become again entangled therein and are overcome. In such a case as that, the latter end is worse than the first; also that it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than afterward to have turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them. These, being the children of God, shall in the end be saved, but it shall be as by fire, and through such a terrible refining that they shall wish they had never been born. These are those who have sinned willfully after having come to a knowledge of the truth, and for all such there remains a

fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation Which shall devour the adversary. Thanks be to God, it is not the wayward child who shall be devoured, but all those things adverse to his peace Which have caused him to wander, those things shall be devoured, and the child brought at last to his eternal home in the bosom of the Father; but no words can express, nor shall be ever be able to describe, the awful anguish and bitterness of soul which all apostates must eventually be brought through in order to purge them of their dross. Their latter state of humiliation and condemnation at the end of this gospel age shall be worse than at their beginning, and it shall be awful for them to have to blush for shame when Christ comes in his glory to be admired in all them that believe. Christ is the avenger of his people's wrongs, and no one who has ever offended one of his little ones can escape in the end. God is not mocked, and there is sure to be a time of restitution for all these things. The doctrine of Jesus Christ and the simplicity of the order of the apostolic church have been fiercely assailed from the first, and never more so than by those who are themselves the children of God. The creeping in of false teachers leads away those who are unstable souls, and the time comes when even believers will not stand for sound doctrine, and insist on easy or smooth things.

Time and space will not permit us to mention all the heresies that have from time to time assailed the church, but we cannot forbear to mention a few that are bewitching some of the Lord's people today. One of the ways in which believers today deny the Lord that bought them is when they teach that eternal salvation is all of grace, but that time salvation is conditioned upon one's obedience to gospel precepts. This is a cunning deception and has led away many. The salvation of the believer here in his journey through time is all of grace, and if he walks obediently to the gospel that very obedience is of grace and is the fruit of the Spirit, and not of self.

Another deception today prevailing among the Lord's people is that which teaches the purpose of God comprehends all good things, but not the evil things. It is an attempt to limit the sovereignty of God over all worlds, principalities and powers, and as such, it is a denial of the Scriptures and an insult to God Almighty, an insult which shall be well taken care of when Christ comes. Another very dangerous inclination abroad at present among God's people is the tendency among many preachers to over-spiritualize the Scriptures. Now, all of us must know that the Bible is a spiritual book, but we must not go so far as to think it not literally true. To preach Adam as the figure of Jesus Christ is correct, but to go so far as to say there never was any Adam, and never was any garden of Eden; that the Genesis record of creation merely teaches a spiritual lesson, and did not actually take place, all this is exceedingly dangerous. To set forth the spiritual meaning of Noah and the ark is exceedingly edifying to the saints of God, but to say there never was a flood, and never was a literal ark, is to bring in what is not true. Some have even gone so far as to say that a virgin never did give birth to a child, and that the story of Christ's birth is only a spiritual allegory. This is being preached among Old Baptists in some sections. It is well that we beware of all such. Then, too, there is that dangerous heresy regarding the resurrection of the dead, whereby some have spiritualized it into an ethereal nothing, that it loses all sense of power to edify and becomes a fantastic unreality which the faith of no child of God can lay hold of. There is an experimental knowledge of the resurrection which God's people have here in this world, and it is very comforting and instructive to hear that phase of the resurrection set forth, but when one goes on to give the impression that there is no resurrection to be experienced by the Lord's people, except what they have already obtained, when the future resurrection of the body is ignored or openly denied, then it

is time to call a halt, for then spiritualizing becomes a dangerous menace to the church.

Finally, there seems to be a growing disposition on the part of some to deny the actual coming of the Lord at the close of this gospel dispensation, and to preach the coming of Christ as a purely spiritual and experimental thing within the range of the church's life today. We have no wish to deny that Christ did come in the Spirit to set up the gospel church at Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost; we further do not deny that Christ is coming now in the Spirit to quicken his people, each in his own order, from death in sin to life in righteousness, but we do most positively affirm, according to the Scriptures, that Christ is yet to come as he has never come before, and that he will consummate the expectations of this gospel age when he appears to raise the dead, and when those who shall remain alive unto his coming shall not die, but shall be caught up together with the risen dead to meet the Lord in the air. We hope all of us may, by the grace of God, beware of over spiritualizing the sacred Scriptures and thus becoming apostates ourselves. None of us can keep alive his own soul, and only the Lord is sufficient for these things. – L.

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times – Editorial
December 1, 1922

Republished:
Signs of the Times
Vol. 122, No. 11 – November, 1954

A WONDERFUL SWORD.

SISTER Mary Hill Terry, of Oak Lane, Philadelphia, Pa., asks some thoughts from us on the words: "The sword of he Lord

and of Gideon." These exact words occur twice in the seventh chapter of Judges, and nowhere else, but the doctrine involved in them occurs throughout the Bible, from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelation. Gideon was of a poor family in Manasseh, and was the least in his father's house. Him the Lord chose to be the savior of Israel from the Midianites. In his advance against the foe he began with thirty-two thousand men, but by siftings which God applied to this host they became reduced to three hundred before God would allow Gideon to lead them against the enemy. These Gideon divided into three companies of one hundred each. He provided them all with strange weapons: a trumpet, an empty pitcher and lamps in the pitchers. Gideon led them all, saying, "When I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do." So, following their leader, the time came when they broke their pitchers, lifted aloft their lamps, blew their trumpets and cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Gideon is a type of Christ. The fact that the multitude with him was reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred before attacking the enemy, shows that the leadership of Christ against all that arrays itself contrary to truth is always manifested in connection with a remnant according to the election of grace. The visible church is never through all the ages other than a little flock, and never comprehends within itself the whole of spiritual Israel. There are always seine of the Lord's people in every age who are never called into membership in the visible church. Were all the subjects of grace to be brought into the church here on earth, there would be the danger of trusting in numbers and forgetting that their dependence is in the Lord, just as Israel might have done had they gone thirty-two thousand strong against the Midianites. That the visibility of the church always has been in a little flock is shown by Gideon's division of the three hundred into three companies of one hundred each, representing the three great dispensations in the travel of

the church: from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and the present or gospel era. In each and all of these great periods of time the remnant according to grace has never had but the one and the same leader, the spiritual Gideon, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As he commands them to do, so they do. All of them, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, looked to him and testified of him; they saw eye to eye. Gideon's origin was poor and lowly, being the least of the poorest in Israel. Jesus was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, he was born of a woman, and she not a queen of earth, but a poor peasant woman of Judea. Jesus in the earth suffered poverty and misery, pain and woe, the depths of which no one of his people can experience. The blasts of the trumpets sickened the hearts of the enemy with fear. Jesus in the wilderness being tempted of the devil, always answered him with the word of God: t is written thus and so. The visible church, though always a remnant, has always demanded a "Thus saith the Lord" to substantiate any and every thing that claims to be truth. This word of God is the trumpet that divides and tears into sects the armies of the aliens. Not believing the Scriptures, and not being able to gainsay or disprove them, they try to wrest them to their own ends. The empty pitcher is an empty earthen vessel; in it is the secret or hidden light. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may he of God, and not of us." This treasure is, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Jesus, the man, was an earthen vessel, and an empty one; that is, the world, sin and the devil, had no part in him. There was no guile in him. In this earthen vessel was a wonderful light: the fullness of the Godhead bodily. All that can be seen or known of God in grace is manifested in Jesus: God in the flesh. Through suffering, crucifixion and death, this earthen vessel, the man Jesus, became broken, for he says, "This is my body, which is broken for you." Only

through the breaking of this earthen vessel could the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shine in the hearts of the elect of God in all the earth. As earth's sun was setting when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, so heaven's glorious morning dawned in the hearts of the church when the Son of glory rose from the dead. The breaking of the pitcher and the freeing of the light, the death of Jesus and the consequent glory of his resurrection, are the sword of the Lord by which he triumphs over the world, the flesh and the devil. God-given faith in this wonderful victory implanted in the soul of the feeblest child of grace gives him the victory that overcomes the world. This is the secret of how the Lord can take a worm and thresh a mountain. The weapons of the army of heaven are not carnal, but spiritual; they appear foolish and absurd to the world, but, through God, are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. While we do not know exactly what was in the mind of the late Elder Gilbert Beebe when he placed these words, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," at the front of the SIGNS, We do think no more fitting expression could have been selected for the motto of our family paper, because Elder Beebe, in his publication, desired to know among the brethren nothing but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," and strongly emphasized "Thus saith the Lord." Here are the trumpet, the broken pitcher, the exalted light, all a very effective weapon when wielded at the dictation of the antitypical Gideon, with which to slay error and defend the flock of God. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 17.
September 1, 1914

CAVE ADULLAM.

"DAVID therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men." – l Samuel xii. 1, 2.

Cave Adullam was the place of David's hiding from his enemies, the secret place where God's anointed dwelt safely, to which his pursuers did not penetrate. To him here in this secret place came the needy, and over them he became captain. What a singular army was that made up of the distressed, the debtors and the discontented! There are few incidents in David's life that more beautifully and wonderfully prefigure the Christ than this of David's refuge in Cave Adullam. But a few in each age of time have appreciated the true character of Jesus. The popular conception of Jesus and his work has never been the truth. Jesus' real character has been known in the past, and is known now, only by those to whom faith has been given to penetrate to his secret dwelling-place. This is the result of revelation from the Father to his gracious subjects, for it is only by revelation that Jesus can ever be properly believed in. Jesus while in the world himself had two natures: the human and the divine. As a man among the men of his day he was known as being the son of a carpenter of Nazareth. His humanity was apparent to all men, and those who saw nothing but the outward man of him regarded him as a blasphemer, or as a fanatic, or as a heretic, or as an impostor, depending upon the individual viewpoint and judgment of those criticising him. In his essential character as the Son of God, the Word made flesh,

the Savior and Redeemer, but few comparatively knew and loved him, and these because they had been taught of God to know and love him. Jesus, in his spiritual life, was a stranger to the world, and the world a stranger to him. The world could not penetrate beneath the outward mask of his humanity and discover the spiritual man hidden there. This was his Cave Adullarn. That is, his Spirit self was his refuge from those pursuing and hating him, for this Spirit self was the God in him, and God kept him from being touched until his hour had come, and even when his hour had come to make the supreme sacrifice the persecution vented upon him bruised and wounded his body, but could not by any possibility damage his spiritual self. In order to come at the Cave Adullam, which is Jesus' real self, and there find the Captain of our salvation, one must be distressed, or he must be in debt, or must be discontented. Then, too, one must belong to Jesus' Father's house and be one of his brethren. This takes us back to before the foundation of the world, when God chose or elected his people unto salvation in Jesus Christ, the period known only to God, when he wrote their names in the Lamb's book of life. To have been thus chosen of God in his Son before the world began means that some time or other, according as God has fixed, he will reveal himself to us. This revelation is the assurance of our pre-world election in Christ. One of the first-fruits of this revelation in the sinner's soul is distress. He is made to see himself wholly a sinner, without one good thing in him, full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores from the sole of the foot even unto the head, the whole man is sick, without one spot of soundness in him. This causes sharp distress to the conscious sinner, making him to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The sincere, heartfelt cry of the soul penetrates unto Jesus' real self, it finds him in his Cave Adullam. The sinner, thus made sensible of his sins, realizes that he is ten thousand talents in debt without one farthing to pay. He sees

that he has never kept one single commandment of the law of God, and never can, that he has never done anything but transgress God's law in thought, word and deed. So he sees himself a debtor to the law. These are the characters to whom God gives the spiritual discernment of living faith to cause them to seek him whom their soul loveth and to find him in that cave retreat hidden from the gaze and understanding of all men. Another mark of the election of grace is to be discontented. That is, to be discontented with self, with sin, the flesh and the world; God's Spirit working in the subjects of his grace brings about this dissatisfaction with self. It is a mark of true discipleship that one hates his own life. Very few of those who openly and loudly declare their zeal for God really know what it means to hate one's own life. This Spirit-begotten discontent with self urges one on and on in quest of that which is infinitely higher than self: the selflessness of Christ. Thus do the discontented come unto him in his Cave Adullam, or the real inner self and character of the real Jesus Christ. When John the Baptist was in prison and sent messengers to Jesus to ask whether he was the Christ or should they look for another, Jesus sent back the messengers to tell John again those things in which Christ is seen. The first of these evidences of the Christ is that the blind receive their sight. Has one ever been blind to the things of God? Yes, all of mankind are thus blind by nature, not one of them able to see God or to make themselves see him. But the Christ of God comes unto the elect of God from among all mankind and gives them eyes to view him. Then these say, Once I was blind, but now I see. To have been blind and to have been made to see the things of God as they truly are is to have been visited by Christ, and to have gotten acquainted with him in the very essence of his being. To have had that lameness which makes one unable to walk the way of God's commands, and so to have been disobedient, and then to have had that lameness cured by

the imputation of Christ's obedience, is to have known Christ. To have known the fearful leprosy of one's sins, and then to have had those sins washed away in Jesus' blood, is to have known the true Christ. To have been deaf to the sound of the gospel, and then to be given ears to hear the joyful sound, is to have known Christ. To have been dead in trespasses and sins, and then to have been quickened by the Spirit and raised to the newness of spiritual life in Christ, is to have been brought into communion with our spiritual David in Cave Adullam. Have you ever been poor in spirit? That is, have you ever felt that you were lacking in all the things of God's Spirit? Have you ever in this poverty-stricken condition had the gospel preached to you with such power that you could not gainsay your interest in it? If so, you have seen and known the Christ. You have heard the call of your Captain from, his Cave Adullam, that pavilion where he hides you in the day of trouble, that secret of his tabernacle.

"From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat,
found beneath the mercy-seat."

But for the mercy of God to usward in Christ we should be without any refuge in the day of trouble, any shelter in the time of storm. So, in the days of David, the poor and the sorrowful and the unhappy found a safe retreat with David in Cave Adullam. Infinitely better than that cave of old, but, nevertheless, fore-shadowed by it, is that wonderful virtue and power of Jesus' real inner Spirithood to shelter his people in all their woes, to save them from all their sins, to protect them from all the poisonous, fiery darts of the world and the flesh, which constitute the adversary of our peace. We do not think one has ever found the secret of true living until he has been to Cave Adullam and has had fellowship and communion with Jesus in his true inner self. Men of the world

and of the worldly churches have various and peculiar ideas as to what constitutes true living. From the scriptural standpoint, the true life is to know one's self as one really is. Thus, it is to know that one is a sinner, in debt, and extremely miserable therefore, then to be driven by the lash of one's very extremities to seek out Christ in the safe and sure retreat of the Cave Adullam of his inner and true oneness with God; this we feel sure, is the essence of all true living. Those who, by the grace of God, have known something of this true life shall never really die. They may appear to die, but death can never really touch them, for they are God's anointed, and Saul cannot touch God's anointed. For them death is abolished and the resurrection assured. Every child of God lives two lives: the outer or fleshly life, which all men see, and by which men mostly know us; the other the inner or spiritual life, the Cave Adullam life, which is secret from the gaze and understanding of all around us. This inner life is often to the tired soul a restful retreat from the storm and stress of the outer life. It is in this inner life that one holds sweet fellowship with God. It is with this life that we lay hold on more life to fight the good fight of faith, if we fight it at all. It is in this inner life that the Captain of our salvation trains and disciplines his followers to endure that hardness which is the lot of all the soldiers of the cross.

L. (Elder Lefferts)

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 2
January 15, 1919

I CHRONICLES XVI. 22; PSALMS CV. 15.

"Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

The ark of God had been sojourning in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite after the fall of Uzza, who had fallen through being smitten of the Lord on account of his having put out his hand to steady the ark when the oxen stumbled. Now David having subdued the Jebusites, makes Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom after having established the seat of his government there, goes down to the house of the Gittite with the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord. This they do, the Levites bearing the ark, with "shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps." This, then, is the occasion of David's wonderful psalm of thanksgiving, in which his mind is stirred up to recall all the way the Lord has led his people in all the vicissitudes of their journey from their former humiliation in Egypt to their now exalted and prosperous condition in the land of promise. All this had been in fulfillment of the covenant which God had made with Abraham hundreds of years before, which covenant God had confirmed unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance. This promise God had made to his people when they were but few and were as yet strangers in that land which he covenanted to give them later on In those days of littleness and feebleness they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another, and he suffered no man to do them wrong, even reproving kings for their sakes. The reason for all this safety in the midst of strangers and strange lands was that God said, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." When God speaks, it must be done as he says, there is no resisting his will. When he said, "Touch not," they could not be touched, however much their enemies might desire to do them harm. The anointing of the Lord cannot, must not, be despised, and those thus anointed, however mean they may be in their own

persons and in the estimation of others, yet they must be respected and let alone, for the Lord will not suffer his anointed to be dealt with as men please. First of all, Christ is the great Anointed of the Father, and if there be any others that are the anointed of God it can only be as they receive their anointing through Christ Jesus. Before the foundation of the world Christ was anointed the great High Priest of our profession; he was appointed from eternity to offer in the fullness of time the great and only sacrifice which could and should take away all the sins of the elect. He stood from the foundation of the world as a lamb slain; not that he was actually slain from the foundation of the world, but that in the purpose, plan and predestination of God his being slain was all mapped out and virtually accomplished in the mind of Almighty God. He was, therefore, from eternity appointed, set apart, consecrated and, to sum up, anointed with the Holy Spirit of the Godhead unto the great sacrificial and mediatorial work which he should in the course of time come into the world actually to perform. All this being so, the anointed of God could not be touched, nothing could alter, hinder or hasten the work of Christ Jesus. He must come, not too late, and not too soon, but right in the right place and at the right time, to do the work and the will of the Father in the earth. All the schemes or men and devils could not touch this anointed One. His enemies could not endure the directness and the force of the truth which he preached, they took up stones to stone him, they essayed his destruction in various ways, they laid pitfalls for him and fell in them themselves, they attempted to ensnare him, but succeeded only in entangling themselves. All their schemes for his ruin came to nothing, for his hour had not yet come, and until it did come he was as safe in the belly of hell as he would have been if caught up to the throne of his Father. He could not die until his time came; that is, the time appointed of the Father, and when that time did come the intervention of

Peter with his sword, and indeed of the whole church, had that been possible, could not have prevented it. But even when his hour had come he could die only in the place and at the time and in the manner decreed by his almighty Father. No farther could the wild waves of wrath encroach upon him than God had intended. It had been said by one of the prophets that not one bone of his body should be broken, and not one bone of his body was broken, though the legs of each of the thieves on either side of him were broken to make them die quicker. Jesus they could not touch, for God had said, “Touch not mine anointed.” Of course, this hateful mob had no idea of the doctrine of predestination, and would have derided the thought that they were doing only what God's hand had determined before to be done, that they could not do more and could do no less. But whether they knew it or did not know it, the predestination of God was fulfilled in all they did. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. This he did. He did not try to save them, he did not merely make their salvation a possible thing, but he successfully accomplished the salvation of all his people perfectly and completely. He finished the work given him of the Father to do. Unto all this he was anointed before the world began, and the Anointed could not be touched; that is, he could not be prevented or helped in this work, or turned aside from it one jot whatsoever. God had sworn by himself, because he could swear by no greater, that Christ should be a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, after the power of an endless life. He alone can make atonement satisfactorily unto God for all the sins of all his people. Now, to attempt to add to the work of Jesus by some work of our own is to touch the anointed, and this cannot be done. To detract from the work of Jesus, to say that he did not do what he says he did, that all he did amounts to nothing unless men accept, this all is to touch the anointed, and this cannot be done, for God has said, “Touch not,” and what God

says must stand. It cannot be otherwise than as God says. His word will not return unto him void of fulfillment, It will accomplish that which is God's pleasure, and always prosper in “the thing whereunto he sends it.” God is no less effectual in grace than he is in nature, and why men persist in claiming that God needs their help in matters of grace, when he can get along so well without their help in matters of creation, is beyond the spiritual mind to comprehend. If God cannot save a soul without man's help, how did he ever manage to get the world made right and the universe set in motion without some of us there to help him? The whole effort system as preached and believed by the so-called christians of this day is an attempt to touch God's anointed, and to rob him of the diadem which is rightfully his. It will all come to naught, they shall be confounded, shall all be overwhelmed in shame, for God has said, “Touch not mine anointed,” and he will avenge his Beloved in his own time and in his own way. However, the word “anointed” applies not only to Christ himself, but to all that are in him. Aaron was a type of Christ, and you remember that when the holy oil was poured upon his head it ran down over his beard and over his garments to even the skirts thereof. No part of the body of the high priest but what shared in this anointing. So with Christ, the antitypical High Priest, there is not a part of his body, not a single member, but what receives the anointing in, some measure. All the elect are anointed in and through him, all have an unction of the Holy One, and just as Christ cannot be touched, just as he cannot be robbed of his glory, just as he cannot be hindered or helped in all his work, just so not one of the elect can be robbed of the crown of righteousness laid up for them, cannot be blotted out of the book of life, cannot be prevented from finally persevering unto the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled reserved in heaven for them. On land or on sea, in war or in peace, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth, in hell or in

heaven, all and each one of God's people are safe. They are safe at all times and in all places. They live a mystical life, they move in a mystical world, they cannot be touched, none can do them hurt, they cannot suffer harm. We do not mean that God's people do not have their trials and afflictions, these they must have, but even these things cannot touch them; that is, cannot hurt or harm them, but will do them good, for no matter what comes to pass in the lives of God's people it is all for their good and for the glory of God. Everything and all things promote the welfare of God's people. Even when Stephen was being stoned to death it was only his body the stones pelted, they could not touch his life, and every blow from the stones as they were being hurled upon his poor body was but bringing death nearer and nearer to him that he might fly away and be forever at rest in the presence of the Father. The anointed, the real Stephen, his enemies could not touch. They could and they did, indeed, torment his body, but we fear not them which can merely destroy the body, but rejoice that it has been given us to fear God, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. We are all strangers in a strange land, this world is not our home, we have here no continuing city, we seek a city whose builder and maker is God. By faith we have caught the gleam of that city's gates of pearl, and press on to follow on to know the Lord, hoping to attain unto the resurrection of the dead and the knowing him without a veil between. In the meantime, as we move about here, in this lower world among strange peoples that cannot speak our language nor comprehend us, we are safe. Just as of old, Israel went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another, and God suffered no man to do them wrong, but reproved kings for their sakes, saying, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,” no now no man or men can do wrong to the church, for she is anointed in Christians and no wrong can be done her. Whatever comes her way must be right, no

matter what it is. It cannot be wrong. All things that the people of God individually or collectively experience cannot do them wrong. It is all right, whatever it is. All is, as we have said, for their good and for the glory of God. We do not see how it is so, nor can we explain how it is so, but we know it is so, for God says it is so; and we believe that what God says is so. We have only to know that God says a thing to know that it is so. Reason wants an explanation, but faith accepts gladly God's word without explanation. God will not stoop to appease our reason, but he will always respond to our faith, for faith never asks but what God is pleased to give. Every One that testifies of Jesus is a prophet, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The gospel ministry, the preaching of Jesus, is therefore prophetic according to the scriptural definition of prophecy, for it is the testimony of Jesus. God says, “Do my prophets no harm.” The gospel ministry cannot be stamped out, those that preach it cannot be harmed. They will, they must, have trials to endure that would 'daunt the most courageous, but these things will do them no harm. The life of their spirit will thrive in all these things. Preaching is not an easy task, and the pulpit is no place for a coward. If ever the church needed clear, plain forceful, discriminating setting forth of the truth of God, it is now. This is a soft age, but the truth is just as hard as ever, and it ill becomes us to modify its hardness or smooth it to men's liking. We do not believe that one so anointed to the work of the ministry can hold back part of the truth and rest easy in his Conscience. It is not necessary to ridicule publicly what the world believes, it is not necessary to be sarcastic, it is not necessary to be personal in one's remarks, nor to be insulting, but let the trumpet send forth its certain sound, let none be in doubt as to what we mean, whether they hear or whether they forbear. If we have friends, let them be our friends fully aware of our position, and not our friends because they think we are something we

are not. Let us be honest, let us be straightforward. Let us not evade the Issue for which we are set as witnesses in the midst of a world gone mad with the wealth of mammon and drunken with the wines of Babylon. Let the clear far call of the trumpet of our God sound forth throughout the darkness of this present evil world. You need not fear any harm, you cannot be harmed, for God has said, “Do my prophets no harm.” His word guarantees the security of all who prophesy in his name, so go at it with all the might that is in you. “Jesus Christ and him crucified,” sound it forth to your last breath. Nothing can hurt you. God says so. Requested. **L.**

Elder H. H. Lefferts, Leesburg, Va.
Signs of the Times
Vol.84, No.5 March 1, 1916

I CORINTHIANS III. 16.

"KNOW ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

We have been requested to write on the above subject, and though the ground has been covered many times before by the writers of the SIGNS, we feel to add our mite to what has been said upon this subject, though not with the idea of presenting anything new. In the verses preceding the text Paul calls attention to the only foundation upon which the church either as a whole or as individuals rests: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” True, there are many false prophets gone out into the world who do try to lay some other foundation for man's security than Jesus Christ; some try to lay a foundation of creature goodness, others a foundation of creature works, still others foundations of various isms and schemes guaranteed by their authors to rid the world of sin and to usher in a new era of peace and good will. But Paul knew,

the Corinthian brethren knew, and every one of God's people to-day knows, that there is no name given under heaven among men whereby the elect must be saved but the name of Jesus; he alone brings salvation. His name was called Jesus because “he shall save his people from their sins.“ It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The reason why the people of God know there is no other foundation than Jesus Christ, and the reason why all other people do not know this, is because God has revealed this to his people and has not revealed it to the world. There was a time in Paul's life when he, as Saul of Tarsus, did not know this foundation, and went about persecuting those who believed and preached Jesus, but the Lord in a very wonderful way (yet not more wonderful than his dealings with all his people) brought Saul of Tarsus to repentance, and to the knowledge of this one foundation, Jesus Christ, and sent him on his way as Paul to preach that which he once hated, and to preach to those he once persecuted. This change in the career of Paul is explainable on no other ground than that it was the work of God's grace revealing Jesus Christ in him. After presenting Christ as this one foundation, Paul in the few verses preceding our text mentions two kinds of ministry: one builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones; the other builds wood, hay and stubble. But every man's work, that is, each ministry, will be made manifest. There is bound to come a day of trial which will reveal the ministry of God's servants. If their ministry stands the test of this fiery trial it is proof that they have built gold, silver, precious stones. If their ministry cannot stand the fire, they have built wood, hay and stubble. Now, some say that salvation begins in grace, but is carried on by ourselves; that Jesus quickens the dead sinner, brings him to repentance, starts him on the right road, then leaves him to obey or disobey as he chooses. This kind of preaching or ministry is building up wood, hay and stubble on

the foundation, and is sure to fail when the fiery trial comes. When afflictions come to that one who has tried to earn his blessings by his obedience that one finds that no matter how hard he tries to walk obediently he cannot escape suffering, and further, that one finds no satisfaction or comfort in anything he can attain unto by his own efforts. To preach that salvation begins in the Spirit and is carried on by ourselves is to build up wood, hay and stubble. Now, the other ministry which builds up gold, silver and precious stones is the ministry, such as Paul's himself, which declares Jesus first, last and all the way through. This ministry declares him the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the author and the finisher of his people's faith. Salvation by grace and grace alone, first last and all the time, is the ministry, and the only ministry, that will adequately stand the test of the fiery trial, which will be a comfort and support when all else fails. However, if there is any child of God anywhere who is bewitched by the "wood, hay, stubble" ministry, who has been deceived to think he can earn blessings by his obedience, that child will not be lost, but he will "suffer loss," but he himself shall be saved, "yet so as by fire." There is salvation to the Lord's people in these fiery trials. The fire consumes their idolatries, but they themselves are preserved. All that the fire did to the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace was to burn off their bands, it did not hurt them. So do the fiery trials sent the Lord's people rid them of earthly and sensual bonds so to bring them a new realization of their liberty in Christ Jesus. The church is the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in the church, and in each and every member of the church. In the sixth chapter of this same letter Paul says, "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own!" It seems that in this letter Paul is addressing the Corinthian brethren as a church collectively, and not as

individuals. Thus, his saying, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,” seems to mean in this instance not so much that the mortal body of each believer is the temple of the Holy Ghost (though that is true), but that the church as a “body,” “your body,” is the temple of the Holy Ghost. However, we do not mean to stress this point, because in the connection in the sixth chapter he says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” and here, beyond a doubt, he is speaking of the individual body of each believer, and doing so to press the truth that we should keep our bodies clean, that is, we should not join our bodies to harlots, and thus commit fornication. We think there are some of the Lord's people who believe that salvation is by grace, and grace alone, and yet they will sit at meat in the idol's temple; that is, they will commune with those who do not believe in the efficacy of Jesus’ blood and who worship the works of their own hands. Is not this joining one's body to a harlot, and committing fornication? Why not come out from among them and be separate, and touch not, taste not, handle not, the unclean thing? However, going back to our text in the third chapter, Paul tells us what the temple of God really is. The temple of God is not anything that man can build. It is not composed of stone or marble or wood beautifully wrought. When Paul stood on Mars Hill in the city of Athens, that city which was then the centre of the world's learning and culture, he could from where he stood survey the magnificent buildings which the Greeks had builded to house their idol gods. Even today these buildings are splendid in their ruins, and tourists travel from all over the world to see them. What must they have been in the days of their entirety and preeminence? Yet Paul looked around upon the spectacle of Athenian splendor, and then boldly declared that the Almighty dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and

all things. Think of the millions and millions of dollars that have been spent in the erection of magnificent and stupendous structures called “churches” and cathedrals for God to dwell in, yet he does not dwell in one of them, not one of them is really his church. No man or set of men can build a dwelling appropriate for the habitation of Almighty God. We hear from many quarters laments and regrets that so many of the beautiful cathedrals in Europe have been sacrificed to the guns of the warring nations, but those cathedrals are nothing but monuments memorializing error, and are better razed than raised. Vital religion will not suffer a bit from their downfall. David when king of Israel thought he would build a house for God, but God very quickly showed him his inefficiency to do any such thing: “Shalt thou build mean house for me to dwell in? * * * the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house.” David could not be permitted to build God's house, for he was a man of war, but, “When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.” We understand the word of the Lord here refers to Jesus, who was to descend after the flesh from David's line. We do not think Solomon is meant here, because God says, “I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever,” and Solomon's kingdom was not stablished forever. Jesus, the son of David, and the Son of God, is the builder of the temple in which dwells God. He builds the temple not of dead things such as stone and marble, but of living material, “lively stones,” men and women of Adam's race born again, born from above, according to the will of God, begotten of his Holy Spirit. In these quickened subjects of God's grace made alive from the dead, and raised up together with Christ to sit together in the heavenlies, in these God dwells, so that they are in him and

he in them, even as Christ and the Father are one. The tabernacle of God is with men. We so often are prone to think of God as away off from his people, and it is a blessed and comforting thought when we realize that God is right here on earth with his people, and that they are in him. The surest way to know that God is in you is to know that you love the brethren, for "God is love," and if this love be in you then God is in you, and you are a temple of God. "The kingdom of God is within you." How natural it is to look for the kingdom to come from somewhere outside ourselves, but the religion of God is a principle that declares that the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth. This kingdom is in power. The wind blows where it lists, and we hear the sound of it, but we cannot tell whence it comes nor whither it is going, yet so is every one that is born of the Spirit. We cannot conceive of "power," yet "power" is more real, more vital than things we can imagine. The things we can imagine are the frail, the ineffectual things. Those things which are beyond our conception, but which are constantly swaying us averse to our will, they are the only real things after all. Thus, the kingdom of God is better felt than described. It defies expression, because it is not in word, but in power. God is a Spirit. He is not tangible nor evident to our natural mind or senses. He is Power, he is Love. It is the power of God that makes a sinner believe in him, it is this same power that enables him to hear the gospel or to preach it. The love of God shed abroad in the heart causes us to love the people of God, for surely if we love God we must love that which is begotten of God. There is no such thing as saying we love God, whom we have not seen, when we love not our brother whom we have seen. This Power and this Love are God. It is in this way that God is known: in the manifestation and revelation of himself, not in imaginings or speculations about him. **L.**

Elder H. H. Lefferts, Leeshurg, Va.
Signs of the Times
Vol.84, No.13 July 1, 1916

1 CORINTHIANS III. 17.

"IF any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

We understand this to mean that any man who defiles the temple of God by bringing into it false doctrines or false practices shall be destroyed from the love and fellowship of the church. The destruction here meant is not an eternal destruction, but a destruction here in time, a destruction that casts one out of the visible organization of the church, that excludes one from the fellowship of the church and from participation in the privileges and ordinances of the church. The text can mean nothing but this, because the temple of God cannot be defiled only so far as the visible organization of the church here in the world is that temple. The temple of God, as meaning the whole host of the redeemed, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus' sacrifice of himself, cannot be defiled, because the body of Christ in its mystical meaning is beyond the reach of human defilement, removed beyond the machinations of men and devils. Therefore the word "temple" in our text must refer to the church here in the world in its militant state, in its visible organization. The visible organization of the church, ever since the days of the apostles, has been troubled more or less by men who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, who brought in false doctrines, who introduced disorderly practices and institutions, who have offered strange fire on altars built to idols. These things, foreign to the teachings of Christ and his apostles, have defiled the visible organization of the church,

not to the extinction of the church, but to the condemnation of those who introduced them. God is not mocked, and no man can presume to introduce heresies into the temple of God without calling down on himself the vengeance of God in the protection of his people. Wolves cannot wantonly molest the sheep of God's pasture without sowing to themselves destruction which casts them forth out of the fold to wail and gnash teeth in the outer darkness. Paul is writing this way to the church at Corinth because some strange things were then among them which were defiling their order and walk. For one thing, controversies had arisen regarding baptism, which had resulted in the manifestation of a party spirit among them. Partisanship always defiles the temple of God. Again, they were not observing the Lord's supper in a gospel manner, but were employing it to satisfy their appetites, not discerning the Lord's body. Any such eating and drinking was a defilement of the order of the church. Again, fornication was being permitted in the Corinthian Church: a member had lived unseemly with his father's wife. This immorality was a defilement of the temple; that is, of the visible organization of the church. Now whoever was guilty of any of these things in the Corinthian Church was guilty of defilement of the temple, and therefore the Lord would destroy him. This destruction, as we have said before, did not necessarily mean eternal destruction, but destruction from the fellowship of the church, being cast off from the privileges and ordinances of the visible church. Peter says: "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you." John says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Let such as speak perverse things contrary to the doctrine of Christ be

excluded from the privileges of the temple. This is the destruction that God will surely visit on all that defile the temple. The wicked may prosper, but it is only for a little time.

Requested by E. W. Hatcher, McEwen, Tenn. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 22.
November 15, 1916

2 CORINTHIANS V. 10.

"FOR we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Here we are told of certain ones that must appear before Christ's judgment-seat. Paul speaks of them as "we," therefore he means himself, together with those to whom he is writing the letter, which, in this case, is the church at Corinth, "with all the saints which are in all Achaia." We conclude from this that none but believers must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and that with believers it is a case of must appear, not may or shall or will appear; that is, there is a needs be or necessity for the appearance of every child of God before the judgment-seat of Christ. Whatever judgment-seat the nonelect appear before, it certainly is not Christ's judgment-seat, for he is Head over his house, and the elect of God constitute his house. The nonelect are under God's judgment, but not subject to the judgment of God's Anointed (Christ). Here we must distinguish between the judgment of God and the judgment of Christ. While God and Christ are one, yet there is a difference, or a different relation between that in which God

reveals himself to his elect and that which he bears to the wicked. To his elect people God is Christ: the Savior from sin and the victor over death and hell. In this relation Christ is the head of his elect, and they are his house, they are under law to him, must appear before his judgment-seat. To the nonelect God is Creator; he is not known to them or by them as Savior, victor or any other anointed relationship whatsoever. We are not saying that the nonelect are not or will not be judged, it is not the purpose of this article to discuss that, but we do say that our text at this time does not refer to any such matter, but simply to a judgment that concerns "we" (believers), a judgment to which "we must all appear." The church is not under Moses, nor under the law of sin and death, having been redeemed from under that law by the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. He has bought his people, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, hence they belong to him, and do not belong either to Moses, to Satan, or to themselves. Since the redemption of the elect is finished, since the work is perfect, and since the sanctified ones are forever perfected through this one offering, it must follow that those thus saved or redeemed are forever free from any claim, great or small, which their former captors may have held against them. The debt having all been paid, the elect can never again be brought into judgment by those things which were formerly their condemnation. God is just, and will not demand the payment again of the debt already paid. We say this to emphasize the point that "we must all appear" before the judgment-seat of Christ, who is our living head, our spiritual Lawgiver, and we are not bound to appear before any other judgment-seat than that of Christ, because believers are not subject to Moses, nor to any other master than Christ, he only is their Lord and King. Having tried to make this plain, we now pass to consider for what purpose believers appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Is it to

be judged for their sins? Right here we had better determine just what we mean by sin. Sin is a transgression of law. Now, if we are thinking of the Mosaic law, or of the law of sin or of death, then God's elect cannot sin, for it is impossible to transgress a law to which one is not subject. A citizen of the United States, living in the United States, cannot transgress the law of France, for he is not subject to the jurisdiction of French law. On a higher plane, therefore, a child of God redeemed from under the curse and dominion of the law which once held him captive, can no more transgress that old law, for he is no longer under the dominion of that law. In that sense the believer cannot sin. However, the believer is now under law to Christ, and can and does disobey the commandments of his King, so that in this sense the believer does sin. It is for this that he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. This is what John means when he says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Again, in Hebrews we read, "For if We sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." A believer sins willfully whenever he offends against the truth, whenever he transgresses a command of Jesus or walks contrary to the order and doctrine of the church of Jesus. These transgressions of the believer which grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby he is sealed unto the day of redemption, do not cause the believer to forfeit his portion in Jesus' perfect work, for that would be to unsave what Jesus has saved, or would be the creature undoing the work of the God that made him, which is impossible, because absurd. Further, Paul declares that no creature is able to separate God's, people from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ

of every child of God has nothing to do with their eternal salvation. It is an experience that all God's people have while here in the flesh, and does not affect eternity at all. This appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ is not something that takes place with the believer in the future, after death, but right now, while present in the body. The judgment-seat of Christ is set up in the soul of the believer, Christ is in him the hope of glory, and the believer is constantly before this judgment-seat, he cannot get away from it. He needs not some one outside himself to reprove him, for this inner quickened conscience reproves the believer for every foolish thought and every idle word. "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." The same grace that reveals salvation in a believer also teaches that believer the denial of worldly lusts and ungodliness, to the end that he should live in sobriety in this present evil world. Thus, whether the believer does good or bad, he receives the things done in his body. If one sows wheat, he will not reap oats; he cannot gather figs of thistles. If one sows to the flesh, he reaps flesh; that is, corruption. If one is enabled to sow to the Spirit, he reaps Spirit; that is, everlasting life. The thought of the Writer in our text is that God's people now while here in the flesh are constantly assembled, or are appearing before Christ's judgment-seat, not to decide whether they shall be sent to hell or shall go to heaven, for that was decided in the mind of God before the foundation of the world, but that the believer may receive right now the things done in his body. If the things done by us in the body are contrary to the law of Jesus and the order of his house, thus sowing to the flesh, we receive or reap flesh; if, on the other hand, grace is given us to obey the law

of the Spirit, and to live in the precepts of Jesus, we do good and we receive or reap good.

Brother John Kerr, of Ontario, has asked us to write on this subject, and we have tried to do so to the best of our present ability. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 8
April 15, 1916

2 CHRONICLES 24:8-14

The word here translated chest, in the original, is the same as that, in other places, translated ark and coffin. There are five of these mentioned in the Old Testament. 1st, Noah's ark, denoting salvation. 2nd. The ark of bulrushes in which Moses, when a babe, was laid, denoting preparation. 3rd, The coffin in which Joseph was laid, denoting sanctification or separation, 4th, The ark of the covenant, over which was the mercy seat, denoting acceptance and 5th, The chest in which were placed the offerings of the people, denoting dedication.

It was no accident that these five different arks appeared in their order, for salvation is first in the experience of the believer and the things which accompany salvation follow in their order. Noah's ark was ordained for the salvation of those whom God chose. The Lord shut them in this ark of salvation, they did not shut themselves in. There was but one window, which was in the top. Here we see God's mercy in sparing Noah the sight of the destruction around him; also, to ace the light, Noah had to look up. What a mercy in times of stress to be enabled to look away from all that distresses us, all the turmoil around us, and to look up by faith to Jesus. The second ark, in which Moses was laid, was at a

time in the history of the Israelites when they were oppressed by the Egyptians. The Hebrews were multiplying so, that the Pharaoh, which knew not Joseph, feared they would revolt. To prevent this, he ordered all male babies to be destroyed. Moses' mother hid her child until he could no longer be hidden, then she made this ark of bulrushes, put her child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. Pharaoh's daughter, coming to bathe, took the child and he was brought up in Pharaoh's house, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, where he was educated as a prince. Here was an opportunity for Moses to be a great man in the world, but Moses, by faith, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, recognized his own people, and chose rather to suffer with them. The Lord was watching over the infant Moses, preparing him for the work that He had for him to do. in the deliverance of the Israelites. So the Lord watches over his people, preparing their hearts to seek him for deliverance from the bondage of Satan and Sin.

Joseph, before he died, took an oath of the children of Israel, that when the Lord should visit his people with deliverance, they should carry his bones with them; so when he died they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt, and when their deliverance came, they did as Joseph had commanded, carrying his coffin through the Red Sea and in all their wanderings in the wilderness until they went into the land of Canaan, Joseph was a type of Christ, and Joseph's body journeying with them was a token of their being a people separate unto the Lord. When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea Joseph's body was with them and the Red Sea closed behind them for them never to return to Egyptian bondage, and even though in their hearts they might lust after the things of Egypt, they could not go back to it, even if they would, and in all their murmurings and lustings after the flesh-pots of Egypt, there was Joseph's body, a silent testimony that they were a separate nation, and could not go

with the world. What a picture of the believer! Even after experiencing many mercies at the hand of the Lord, our hearts are so desperately wicked that were it not for God's grace we should turn back to the world: but those who are a separate people unto the Lord are dead to sin, so how can they live any longer therein; and if our hearts would turn again unto sin, we cannot live in it, for we are dead to it by the body of Christ. When the believer has the remembrance of His body, His sufferings and death in eight, sin becomes exceeding sinful.

The next ark was the ark of the covenant, over which was the mercy seat, and in which was the pot of manna, the unbroken tables of commandments, and Aaron's rod that budded. This ark was made of shittim-wood, a desert growth. In this ark, being a type of Christ, the wood signified his humanity, and being a desert growth was in accord with Isaiah, who, when prophesying of Jesus, said he should be "as a root out of a dry ground." The over-lay of gold signified his Deity. The unbroken law was laid in this ark, and in Jesus is the only place where the law is kept; here also was the manna which kept alive the Israelites, and in Jesus is the sustenance of his people. Aaron was the High Priest for the Israelites, so Jesus is the High Priest of our profession. Over the ark was the mercy Heat. This ark and the mercy seat were in the holiest place, where only the High Priest was allowed to enter to make atonement for the people. The High Priest's garment had bells upon it, and as long as the people heard the bells they knew that the High Priest lived. We, in this age of grace, know that our High Priest still lives, we hear the joyful sound – the proof of it – in the ministry of the gospel. The people also knew, when the High Priest presented himself alive, that his offering had been accepted. All this is symbolical of our great High Priest who still lives to make intercession for us.

The Fifth ark was the chest of the text, which was placed at the gate of the house of the Lord for the reception of the offerings which the people gave willingly, which commandment the Lord laid upon them by Moses in the wilderness, and consisted of such things as the people had to give, not simply money. Turning to the New Testament we find that this was still kept up in the time of Christ, for Jesus watched various ones casting into the treasury: among them was a poor widow who cast in two mites which make a farthing. We hear people speak of giving the widow's mite when they perhaps give five or ten cents for some purpose but this is not the widow's mite at all. The Scripture says she "cast in all that she had, even all her living." In so doing she was casting herself wholly in dependance upon her Lord. So, the Lord's people, when moved by the love of God and the remembrance of his mercies to them, surrender their all to him. All they have is willingly given in his service, their joy is to minister to the brethren of their substance, they love to lay aside earthly cares and assemble themselves together to hear Christ preached, sometimes having to make sacrifices to get there, but the love which they have for their Lord makes them do all these things out of a willing heart. In Acts we read of the church having all things in common, not counting anything their own, but Ananias and Sapphira kept something for themselves, and then, lying about it, they were stricken with death. So a deathlike spirit comes upon those who hold back ought that they have, they lose the joy that there is in spending and being spent in God's service. Paul exhorts believers (notice believers, not those dead in sin) that they present their bodies a living sacrifice, which is their reasonable service, their willing service, but as the hymn says, "Yet if I might make some reserve, and duty did not call, I love my God with zeal so great, that I should give him all."

Thus, from these five arks, we see that these blessings are for believers: that their salvation is of God, and comes first, before any of these other things can follow. The ark of dedication was the last, and so it is with believers, their service to the Lord is the result of first, their salvation, second, the preparation of the heart to receive these things, third, the consequent separation from the world, fourth, their acceptance in the Beloved, and fifth, dedication, their sincere desire to show forth by their walk and conversation the praise of him who has called them out of darkness into his most marvelous light.

Notes of a sermon delivered by Elder H H. Lefferts at Mt. Zion meeting house June 25, 1933
(Taken by Sister Grace Aston)

Republished – Signs of the Times
Volume 149, No. 10

CHARITY

IN the SIGNS for December 15th we tried to present some thoughts on the nature and function of the various gifts placed in the church by the wise Master-builder for the comfort and edification of the body of Christ. No presentation of that subject would be complete without saying something of Charity. Paul in the close of the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, after having enumerated the various gifts, says, "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent Way." He then continues in the thirteenth chapter to expound the best of all gifts, charity. Charity is the life, beauty and effectiveness of all ministry in the church of God. Without it one is as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." The word in the original Greek which is translated charity in the 'thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians is the same word which is translated "love " in Galatians v. 22: "The fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace," and is translated "love" instead of "charity " in other places in the New Testament. Therefore we conclude that love and charity are one and the same thing. King James the First, of England, in 1604, acting on a motion made by John Reynolds, a Puritan, in Hampton Court Conference, and adopted by that body, appointed fifty-four scholars and clergymen to assemble and translate the Scriptures into the English tongue. Forty-seven of those appointed served in making this new translation, which was completed in 1611, and henceforth known as the "Authorized Version." This version still remains the most popular with English speaking people, while very persistent efforts are being made to supersede it with a much more recent "Revised Version." It is true that the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, were written by inspiration of God, and contained no errors as originally given to holy men of old, but in making the various translations that have been made since the Scriptures were thus given by inspiration of God such translations were made by fallible men, for whom inspiration was not claimed. We would not dare say that the forty-seven men who assembled in King James' time to translate the Scriptures into English were inspired men. On the other hand, it is to be supposed that they made mistakes, though it was not their intention to do so, as they labored diligently to have everything as correct as possible. Why these forty-seven men saw tit to translate the Greek word *agapen* as charity in some places and as love in others, we do not know, but as both charity and love are one and the same word in the original tongue, it is not worth while for us to try to discriminate between them, and try to make charity mean something that love does not. To our mind, it would not a whit change the meaning of the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians if the word "love" were read in every place where "charity " is used. Nor must we confuse charity as scripturally used with charity as it is used in a common sense

by the world at large to-day. People nowadays speak of. charity as something external, visible, tangible, while in the Scriptures it is an inward grace-born virtue of the heart. The outward act of benevolence in giving to alleviate the hard lot of the less fortunate of mankind is usually regarded as charity, but not so in the Scriptures. According to Paul, a man might bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and be by the world therefore called a charitable man, yet charity be wholly lacking in the act and in the sight of God. God looks upon the heart, and his judgment is according to what omniscience sees therein, while man hesitates not to call a man a christian if his outward life is all right. Just so the outer surface is clean, it matters not if the interior is full of dead men's bones, so says men's judgment. If the heart be pure, it matters not if the outside be in rags, so says God's judgment. Since it is the judgment of God that concerns his people, we can afford to pass the other by with scant notice. The way in which society is constructed makes poverty necessary. "The poor ye have always with you." It has been said that man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn. In the struggle for existence the fittest survives, the weak go to the wall. As long as man's nature continues to be so supremely selfish as it has ever since man was made, some are bound to accumulate more than their share of ease and riches, while paupers and beggars will continue to be a by-product of so-called civilization. It frequently occurs that those who have achieved success in life by gouging out the existence of their fellow-men, seek a truce with their conscience by handing out a dole to the poor, and expect therefore to be called charitable benefactors of the race. The truth is they are but giving back to those they have robbed a mere pittance of the living taken from them. Why call this charity? If a man robs me of a hundred dollars, and then puts a ten-dollar bill on the collection plate next Sunday, does that atone for his treatment of me? Not until

he comes to me and makes restitution of all he has deprived me can he make it right. So the increase of two cents a gallon on oil all over the country cannot be squared by the donation of a pipe organ to some big city church later on. The endowment of a public library by a steel magnate cannot amend for the hundreds of arms and legs and eyes and lives lost in laying the foundation for that magnate's wealth. Why call all such things charity? They are all a hideous travesty of the truth. They are all but crumbs Hung to the masses by the princes to keep the crowd from pressing too hard upon their masters. Jesus laid the axe to the root of the tree that time that a rich young ruler came who had great possessions, yet who professed to have kept the law. Jesus told him, "One thing thou lackest." That one thing was love, or charity. All obedience is but disobedience without love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Had the young ruler really loved his neighbor as himself, could he have had great possessions? Had such love really actuated him, he could have had not a moment's rest so long as he possessed one farthing more than his neighbor. The fact that he had great possessions showed his obedience to the law to have been but formal, literal. It bespoke an entire absence of the knowledge of the spirituality of the law. Self-love, not love for the neighbor, was his guiding star. If the real charity of Christ was in a millionaire's heart to-day, and ruling him to the exclusion of all else, he would be a poor man to-morrow, for he could not rest in peace until he had descended to the level of the poorest and the weakest. To prove this we have but to point you to Jesus. He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the 1ikeness of men. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Here is charity in all its length and breadth and height. God, though the earth is his and the

fullness thereof, became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and had not where to lay his head. Did not he descend to the level of the poorest and the weakest of all his people "O Yes, he went even lower than they, he was numbered with the transgressors, and made his grave with the wicked in his death. Is not this charity in all its glory? The source of all our charity is Christ. There can be no charity in the hearts of men only as it is engendered there by the Holy Spirit. Jesus laid down his life for his people. This laying down his life applies not only to his final death upon the cross, but all the way along through his life. He was continually laying down his life for their sake. The grace of God in the hearts of his people constrains them to serve one another, to lay down their lives for one another. Paul laid down his life for the church. He counted all the former things as dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He was crucified to the world and the world was crucified to him. He died daily. Here was a continual laying down of his life. Peter was told that when he should become old another would take him and bind him and carry him whither he would not. He, too, laid down his life for his brethren. Jesus calls his servants from the daily walks of life to his service, and no matter how bright the prospects before them they do his bidding and lay down their lives for the brethren. To spend and be spent in the Master's service, without thought of reward or recompence, is the acme of true charity. We asked one who professes to be a preacher the other day, how long he thought the ministers of various creeds would keep on preaching if their salaries should be taken from them. He replied, "Not long, and I, for one, if I cannot make a living preaching, will leave it and go into something else." Surely not much laying down one's life for the brethren here, not much real charity, yet this same man is strenuous in sending sums to foreign missions; being charitable to the heathen, he calls it. Paul lays great stress

on the importance of charity. No gift for the comfort and edification of the people of God is valuable without it. Though one speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, it is an empty sound. It lacks force and directness. One might have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, might even have the faith to remove mountains, still if charity be lacking he is nothing. One might give his substance to the poor, and his body to be burned, but without charity it profits nothing. Paul lists sixteen characteristics of charity or love: long-suffering, kindness, lack of envy, not boasting, not puffed up, decency, unselfishness, patience, right thinking, abhorring iniquity, rejoicing in truth, "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and never fails, and at the close of this thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, concludes by saying, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Why is charity the greatest of the three? Is it because it lives longer than either faith or hope? That may be part of charity's greatness, but it is not all of it. Faith and hope end with this time state, but charity (love) continues on through all eternity. At the close of the believer's mortal life faith is lost in sight, and hope is swallowed up in fruition, but charity never fails. The greatness of charity consists not alone in that it is longer lived than either faith or hope, but also in that it is the very energy, the very life-blood of both faith and hope. Faith without love, hope without love, are dead things. Love is the vitality of all the gifts and graces of the Spirit. Love is the cement that compacts faith and hope. It is the knitting that binds all believers' hearts together. We once heard a man say that he believed the doctrine that the Old School Baptists preached, and hoped in the mercy of God. This same man lived not far from an Old Baptist Church where there was regular preaching, and very seldom went to hear it. What was the matter with him? He lacked charity. His faith and

hope may have been of the right sort, but charity, or love, being absent, he was of no value to the church, he profited nothing. Had charity been his it would have immediately energized his faith and hope and his steps would have immediately turned Zionward. He could not have helped it, he would have shown his faith by his works. Love is the fount of all good works. We might say that a man with faith and hope present and charity absent is like an electric light with the current turned off. The wire is there and the lamp is there, but no light is radiated. Just the moment the key is turned, however, the whole room is lighted from that same wire and lamp, owing to the energy transmitted through it. So one might have the proper faith and the good hope through grace, yet both lie dormant in inactivity until electrified by that love that passes knowledge, that current of eternal vitality which streams from the Head of life through all the members of the body at some stage in the existence of each of them. Herein, then, it seems to us the preeminence of charity lies: in that it gives faith and hope their meaning and substance, transforming them from inactive principles into flaming guiding stars of a spirit-filled life. Charity submerges the interest of the individual in the benefit of the whole, it compels the esteeming of others better than ourselves. It will not compromise with error, for it rejoices not in iniquity; it will not make a brother an offender for a word, for it thinketh no evil. Charity makes one strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. It receives into its fellowship him that is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations. If smitten on one cheek, charity turns the other also. When reviled, it reviles not again, returns not railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. It glories in infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon one. It suffers long, and even then does not get out of patience or become angry, but is kind. What a lofty ideal is before that believer who truly desires to be charitable. It is a goal worth striving for, but

only grace can strengthen for the race. May the Lord accomplish in us all this charity that is so excellent, that our gifts may be enlivened by it, that the fragrance thereof may delight the worshippers in his holy city. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 83, No. 2
January 15, 1915

CHASTISEMENT.

IN the attempt to comply with the request of a brother living in Indiana, and knowing at the same time that any effort of ours will be useless and to no point except the Lord be in the matter, we take up the above tremendous subject, which would require a volume to do it justice and which can be but barely outlined in the space we have before us. The Lord commanded the prophet Hosea to take unto himself an adulterous woman for a wife, so he married Gomer the daugher of Diblaim. This is one of the bitterest things the Lord ever told a prophet to do, but in so doing the Lord intended to give Israel an object-lesson whereby they should know just in what position they were before the Lord. Of this marriage of Hosea with Gomer, were born three children: the first a son whom he named Jezreel, signifying the Lord will scatter; the second a daughter whom he named Lo-ruhamah, signifying without mercy or unpitied; the third, another son named Lo-ammi, signifying not my people. Thus, the fruit of Hosea's marriage to Gomer meant scattered, unpitied and forsaken. Thus Israel had a picture set before their nation, in this marriage of the prophet, showing clearly that Israel ws an adulterous nation and had departed from the Lord who had redeemed them out of Egypt, and had gone whoring

after false gods and false ways, attributing to lovers the thanks and praise rightly due unto the true God. The blessings which Israel had received at the hands of the Lord, she thought came to her from her lovers. Therefore, the Lord said he would take these blessing from her, that he would scatter Israel, show her no mercy, and treat her as if she were not his people at all. As the fruit of Hosea's marriage with Gomer was Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi, so would the fruit of Israel's strayings from the Lord result in their being scattered mercilessly into forsakenness and desolation. Yet, "the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered: and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." There is, therefore, no escaping the conclusion that the chastisement of Israel is to bear fruit in restoration. Where it was said to them, "Lo-ammi," it shall be said "ammi" and "Lo-ruhamah" is to be changed to "ruhamah." Instead of no mercy, she shall obtain mercy. The object of the Lord in the chastisement of his people is never to cast them utterly away from him, but to discipline them for their safety and instruction. Chastisement has for its object the good of the one chastised. This good effect, it always has in the case of the people of God. When God chastises the nations outside of Israel it is for the casting down of those nations, and is often for their destruction. For instance, time and again throughout the New Testament, the Lord destroys whole peoples in order to do his own Israel good and to deliver them from their troubles and their captivities. The Lord did not hesitate, when it became necessary, to give Egypt for the redemption of Israel out of Egypt. "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of

Israel, thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee." - Isaiah xliii. 3, 4. The Lord uses wars, famines, pestilences, deaths, distresses of every sort in order to wear down the nations very much as water continually dropping wears even stones. This he does in order to debase the nations of the earth to bring about the exaltion of his own everlasting kingdom. It is true that the Lord did at one time greatly prosper Babylon and did give Judah into captivity thereunder, but how did it end? It ended by Babylon herself going into captivity, nto for a few years only as had Israel, but permantly. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers which once watered Babylon and made it exceedingly fertile, began to steadily dwindle; and as they dwindled, the Babylon they watered also dwindled until Babylon passed into the limbo of dead nations. Just as surely as ancient Babylon died, it is just as true that the Babylon of the modern world will also, and is now, dwindling never to rise again. As the Lord dried up the ancient river Euphrates, so does he now employ the four horsemen to afflict modern Babylon; just so does he dry up the modern Euphrates which waters and nourishes modern Babylon. This reiver Euphrates represents the resources of the nations' wealth without which they will surely die. When their gold and their silver are gone, their river is dried up and they must perish. As this Euphrates dries up, the nations find themselves unable to resist the coming of the kings out of the east to overwhelm them. Thus, we see distresses, famines, pestilences, wars and all their train wearing down the nations to make way for their overthrow by portentous things out of the east. (Revelation xvi. 12.) My main object in speaking of these things now is to show that while God's chastisement of the nations of the earth means death and destruction to them, his chastisement of his chosen people means life and salvation to them. In the case of God's Israel,

his fatherly chastisements bring restoration; in the case of the world, the fierce fire of his anger consumes it. "Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths." What a blessing it is that we cannot find our own paths. If we could succeed in walking in our paths, those ways of our own devising, we would wanter utterly away from the truth and salvation. However, the Lord so hedges us about with his chastisements that we cannot find our false lovers though we seek earnestly for them, and each time we try to force through this hedge of his care we run ourselves through with thorns. Thus, does he prove to us that we are his people and that we cannot direct our own steps, cannot find our own way. Each time we are determined to have our own way we run against his "wall" which shuts us in. Chastisement, therefore, to the children of God is disciplinary and is for thier instruction in righteousness and for their growth and grace. Chastisement is one of the inevitable marks of the Lord's people. Could we rid ourselves of it, we would prove ourselves to be bastards and not sons. To successfully avoid chastisement, would be to rob ourselves of our spiritual birthright. In a recent SIGNS we published an article of the late Elder L.H. Hardy on this subject in which he showed so aptly that the righteous (not the wicked) have many afflictions, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. So many people associate affliction with disobedience. Some falsely reason that the way to get rid of affliction is to be obedient unto the Lord. This is spurious teaching and cannot stand against the truth of revelation. The Lord chastens all whom he loves, he scourges each and every son whom he receives. To be without chastening is to be a bastard, an illegitmate child. If the church in the days of the apostles, and if the apostles themselves, could have adapted themselves and their teachings to the world in which they then lived, they would have avoided persecution. To have bought exemption from persecution at such a price

would have been to deny the faith and the blood of teh Lord Jesus. Such was utterly impossible. The church at Rome, if it could have conformed to the pagan Roman world of its day, would have secured peace from martyrdom. It could not be. The followers of Christ can no more conform to the world, no matter in what age they live, than they can blot the sun from the sky or create another world. This inability to conform to the world is a lively mark of the true church and is proof that she is indeed the body of Christ; that as her Head was hated by the world of his day to whcih he would not yield allegiance, so his body the church is hated by the world to which it cannot yield obedience. Chastisement, therefore, is a mark of righteousness, not of unrighteousness; of obedience, not of disobedience. In the church at Laodicea, there were mostly those who thought themselves rich when they were, in the Lord's eyes, wretchedly poor; they were increased with goods, needing nothing. Nevertheless, even in Laodicea were a few the Lord loved. These he rebuked and chastised. He did not rebuke and chasten the self-sufficient, proudful ones, but only those he loved. Was not this rebuking and chastening, then, a sign from the Lord that he loved them? Indeed, yes. This Laodicean church aptly describes modern christendom, both Catholic and Protestant. Never at any time before in the world's history has the so-called church been as fat, as prosperous, as wealthy in lands, houses and church edifices as to-day; never has she been as self-sufficient, self-righteous, wanting nothing, as now. Yet, in the midst of even modern christendom are a few whose names are unsullied with idolatries: these elect names are the Lord's. As proof that they are his, he chastens and rebukes them. (Revelation iii. 19.) To these the Lord says, "Repent," and indeed his elect ones are even now repenting of the mondern conditions prevailing all about us, these chosen ones are turning away in horror and disgust from all the pridefulness of the modern world and its religiosity.

In conslusion, it is an awful error to say that chastisement is a mark of the Lord's displeasure. When visited upon the reprobate wicked, it is a mark of his anger; but upon his elect, it proves to them his fatherly watchcare over his people whom he loves. Just suppose that chastisement is a sign of disobedience in the one chastised, then it woudl follow that the way to avoid chastisement would be to obey and to stop disobeying. If correct, the chastisement would cease the very moment the child obeyed. If the chastisement ceased, then that child would be a bastard and not a son. Do you not see what a terrible conclusion such false reasoning would bring us? It cannot be. If disobedience brings chastisement, then the very worst thing we can do is to obey; since obedience would then bring exemption from chastisement, it would also prove our illegitimacy and not our right to the promise as real sons of God. - H.H.L

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 99, No. 3 - March 1931

1944 Delaware Association

Written by Elder H.H. Lefferts

CIRCULAR LETTER

The Delaware Association of Old School Baptists, in session with the Rock Springs Church, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Saturday and Sunday, August 26 and 27, 1944, to the churches composing this association, and to the churches, meetings and associations with which we correspond, sendeth greetings in the Lord.

DEAR BRETHREN: - “Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience

godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2nd Peter 1:5-7. This instruction belongs to those who have obtained "like precious faith" with the apostles of Jesus Christ, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. A tree is known by its fruits, trees of righteousness which are the planting of the Lord distinguish themselves from the unbelieving world by the fruits of the Spirit which they bear. God's election of his people is proven by his giving unto them all things which pertain to life and godliness, and as these things be in them and abound in them, they are made fruitful in the knowledge of God and of Christ, and by these things they are given assurance to themselves that their calling and election of God are sure. By these fruits, not only to themselves, but to their brethren and to all believers, they make proof of the faith that is in them. Faith is justified by works, not in the sight of or before God, but before men. Faith is not an inactive principle in the lives of true believers, but proves itself by its fruits. Works of the creature never can bring about salvation, justification or faith; but where faith is, and where salvation has been made known, the fruits of regeneration will abound. God works in his people to will and to do according to his divine pleasure, thereby they work out or make manifest the salvation that is in them, thus making proof to their own comfort and to the satisfaction of fellow-believers of their having been called and chosen of God. It is not enough only to hear the word, there must be a doing of it. The natural man may look into the glass of the gospel and get a glimpse of what the gospel tells him he is by nature: lost and ruined and undone. But, like the wayside hearer which received unprofitably the seed sown, he turns away from the mirror and straightway forgets what manner of man he is; but not so those who have the light of the knowledge of God shining in unto them by the Holy Spirit. These carry the sentence of death in themselves that they may not trust in themselves,

by sin's being condemned in them by the conviction wrought by the law of God in the hands of the spirit. Being a doer of the word as well as a hearer of it, means one has to be born of the Spirit, created anew in Christ Jesus. These new creatures are ordained to walk in the good works of the Spirit, which works are ordained of God for them. Therefore, if one who professes Christ is not seen walking in the works of the Spirit, what proof have we or has he, that he is a new creature? It is for this reason that Peter, by inspiration, exhorts us to add up our blessings which are given us by his divine power. For if these things are lacking, he declares us to be blind and that we have forgotten we have been purged from our old sins. The church is declared to be the bride of Christ. The bride has many wedding garments in her furnishings, bestowed on her out of the riches of her divine Husband who has redeemed her with his blood and who presents her to the Father without blemish. These bridal clothes are faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc. It gives us assurance that we are called and chosen of God when we are favored to see these things in us; and not only in us, but abounding in us. Wherever we are given to see these fruits in any believer, we can be convinced that such an one is a member of the bride of Christ. The natural man is not decked in this heavenly array, but the redeemed and regenerated children of God are thus clothed. Faith lays hold of this eternal, invisible things of God, it takes God at his word whether there is full understanding of godly things or not, it trusts implicitly in God where it cannot trace him, it awaits his pleasure to make his counsels known, not asky the reason why, but gladly leaving God to be his own interpreter and to make all plain and clear in his own time and way. There are thousands of true believers in these days of world upheavel, who are at rest and at peace in the midst of the storm, because their hearts and consciences have found that peace which garrisons the hearts and minds of those who are

in Christ Jesus. Virtue is that heavenly grace which keeps the heart true to the heavenly lover and which enables the child of God to avoid entanglements in delusions, heresies and false religions, to be unspotted from the world. A virtuous wife is one who is faithful, true and devoted to her husband. This grace of heavenly virtue abounding in them that believe, keeps them true to him who has bought them with his own blood, having loved them from everlasting times. There follows knowledge, because it is the will of Christ, the head of the church, that his people should increase in the knowledge of his grace of his own blessed person. By this knowledge in which they increase by the work of the Spirit within them, they become more and more enamored and ravished with the beauty and excellence of him who is the chief among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. How appropriate that this knowledge should be followed by or accompanied with, temperance! Temperance, scripturally speaking, means self-control. Greater is he who rules his own spirit than he that takes a city, says wisdom. If it were not for this grace of temperance, the knowledge in which the child of God increases would make him or her puffed up with a sense, perhaps of superiority over those not favored with such knowledge; one should then forget that the knowledge is not of ones' self but by divine unmerited favor. Temperance keeps the soul from being inflated over the abundance of revelation, much as Paul was kept humble by reason of the persisting thorn in his flesh. Then comes patience, and we cannot think of patience aside from the accompanying tribulation which works it. Patience is humble submission to the will of God no matter what his will gives or denies. Patience adjudges his will to be a right and perfect will for us at all times, patience kisses the rod that chastens knowing its strokes are in love, not anger. And thus arises the grace of godliness which is God-likeness, the recreating of the image of God in his regenerated people, the image so grossly

marred by sin in the original fall of man. The reign of faith in a true believer, with its accompanying fruits of virtue and knowledge and temperance and patience, add up to a godly life shown publicly by a godly deportment which is an assurance, surely, of such an one's having been called and chosen of God unto salvation, and to all the blessings of the world to come. But godliness without brotherly kindness and charity would be a smug phariseeism without compassion for the infirmities of ones' fellow-believers. Such a smugness is not possible with true godliness. God-likeness is essentially imbued with brotherly kindness and that charity which is the love of God manifested towards men. All true godliness has a doctrinal basis, but doctrine without the fruits of faith is sterile. We are commanded to let our light shine in order that men may see the good works of the Spirit wrought in us, that they may glorify God on our behalf. This is substantially the same as adding up our graces to find the sum of our calling and election. Unless these things be in us, and abound in our lives, we are barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of God. And Christ has warned that the unfruitful branch, his Father takes away. Is that why many of our churches today are languishing in indifference to heavenly things? Is that why laborers are not being raised up and sent into our Lord's harvest? Is that why members are not being added to the churches only sparsely here and there a few? Is that why our preaching is for the most part surface-work with digging deep into the rich treasures of the word? Think on these things. Unless the Lord the Holy Spirit works in us repentance to the effectual turning of ourselves to a more devoted status toward him and his word, our light will go out. The gospel of the grace of God will be preached always, unto the end of the world, but it may be preached by others than ourselves, and the voices of our own churches may be silenced, and the candle of our witness removed, unless there comes into the lives of the ministry as well as into the

lives of the members of the churches, a revival of the Spirit's work among us. Do we desire his work to be revived among us? Is there a prayer within us for him to revive us? If the Spirit is not breathing such a petition in us unto the Throne of Grace, such a reviving will not come. He always causes us to strongly and earnestly desire the blessings which he plans to give us; if, therefore, there is no life of prayer in us for the Zion of God, what evidence have we that he means to bless? It is not, at this time, known when and where the 1945 session of the Delaware Association will be held, we can make no plans with all things to-day so evidently impermanent as they are. Announcement of the holding of our next associational meetings will be given out later. Watch the Signs of the Times for such announcement. All things are in God's hand, and he will make it manifest in due time what we are to do, and where and how we are to do it. We await his divine pleasure. Should it please God that we meet next year, we shall hope to have with us then your ministers and messengers to meet with us. We trust that this present meeting in which we are now engaged has been to the glory and honor of God, to the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the love and fellowship of the Holy Ghost have prevailed among us; that the souls of the hearers have been edified and comforted in the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace.

(Elder) Douglas L. Topping, Moderator
Charles B. Osborne, Clerk

Signs of the Times
Volume 113, No. 2
February 1945

CORRESPONDENCE

22 N. Fourth St., Camden, N. J., Feb. 5, 1901.

Elder F. A. Chick – My Very Dear Brother In Christ: – Ever since you visited us in December, I have felt that I ought to write to you and tell you how much I enjoyed your visit, but my pride, that evil with which all men are cursed, kept me from doing it, because it made me feel that I had nothing to write that would be of any satisfaction to the ones who read it. Now that I have begun this letter, I still feel weak, and must look to the God of our salvation to guide my.pen, if I would write anything that will be of any comfort to one of his dear children. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of our salvation, the author and finisher of our faith. A sermon of which he is not the context, will not be blessed with the unction of the holy Spirit, and consequently will not make the deaf to hear nor the blind to see, finding no lodgment in the hearts which God has sanctified to himself. Our God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. A letter of which he is not the sole theme will be but a smattering of ink upon a sheet of paper. The words will not stand forth ns though written in gold; they will not rejoice the afflicted, nor lift up the heavy laden, neither will they come as a harbinger of peace with tidings of great joy to one of God's children. Thus it will be with this letter; if I talk not of Christ, and ascribe all glory and honor to his holy name, I may as well lay aside my pen, for nothing that I could write would be of any comfort to you, or any one else that belongs to our Father's family.

In the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses says, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness to our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation." Now

we see that Moses starts out by declaring that his doctrine will drop as the rain, and that his speech will distill as the dew. "What does Moses mean by my doctrine? Does he mean some theory that he has worked out, some scheme which he has evolved out his brain as a result of much study and intellectual strength, by which he would teach others how to live in order to be worthy of the favor of God? It is true that the word doctrine, in English, is derived from a Latin word implying something that may be taught, but the original word in Hebrew which is translated "doctrine," in this instance, implies *something that has been received* rather than *something that may be taught,* so that Moses seems to be saying to the heavens and to the earth, "Give ear," for "I will declare what I *have received* at the hands of the Almighty, and what God himself has revealed unto me," and in doing this, "my speech shall distill as the dew." Following this he gives four reasons why his speech will distill as the dew: "Because I will publish the name of the Lord," is the first one; "Ascribe ye greatness to our God," is the second one; "He is the Rock, his work is perfect," is the third, and the fourth and last is, "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children." These four constituents of Moses' doctrine are what caused it to drop as the rain and distill as the dew. Even so to this day every sermon which we hear preached must have in it these four elements in order to be called a gospel sermon, and in order to give comfort to any one of our heavenly Father's children. In other words, a sermon must publish the name of the Lord, declaring that he and he alone can save us from our sins, and that "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Such a sermon must also ascribe greatness to our God, for he is great in truth, great in justice, great in mercy, great in works which are all wonder-working, and in short, *all* greatness must be ascribed to him. Not only this, but every gospel sermon must say, "He is the Rock: his work

is perfect." It must declare him as the only foundation upon which a poor, lost and ruined sinner can rest in security, "all other ground is sinking sand." Also, it must say the work of Christ is a perfect work. The sufferings and death of Christ are a perfect atonement for the sins of all his people. His redemption is perfect, and in that redemption man's work has no part nor parcel.

Now a sermon may do all of the above, and yet fall short of the truth unless it comes up to the fourth requirement of a gospel sermon. It must declare, "They have corrupted themselves." That is, it must preach that man is wholly and entirely corrupt, that the flesh is not and cannot be capable of any good thing; "All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field."

A sermon that publishes the name of the Lord, ascribes greatness to our God, declares him as a Rock and his work as perfect, and declares man as corrupt, and capable of no spiritual good, is and always will be a gospel sermon. Such a sermon is the only one that God will ever bless with the unction of his holy Spirit, and such a doctrine alone will drop as the rain and distill as the dew in the hearts of God's little ones. A sermon that contains three of the above elements, and not the fourth, will always fall short of the truth, and nothing but the *whole* truth will do.

Now, my dear brother, I will not tire you any longer with my scribbling. In looking over this, I find I have not written in the strain in which I intended to write, but have written simply as my mind has been led, and such as I have, give I to thee.

And now, with love to you and all the dear kindred in Christ, I remain your unworthy brother in hope of eternal life,

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 69, No.5
March 1, 1901

CORRESPONDENCE 2.

22 N. Fourth St., Camden, N. J., June 29, 1901.

Elder F. A. Chick – Dear Brother In Christ: – Feeling in the mood for writing, and my mind reverting continually to you, once more I address you as above, for what purpose I know not, only that I desire to hear from you, and take this means of getting a thought or two from your pen. Were you to meet me on the highway and greet me with the usual salutation, "How are you!" I scarcely know how I would answer you. No very deep trials, spiritually or otherwise, have stirred my mind since coming within the portals of the Zion of our God. My chief uneasiness is felt when I am brought in contact with the world around me. This hurts me. Imagine how sensitive the body would be were the outer or scarf skin removed, and you will have a very clear idea of my state of mind when in the course of my daily walk I am brought in contact with unbelievers, or what is worse, the adherents of popular religion. I think it would be more in conformity with the experience of the saints, were I to realize more intensely that my worst enemies are "those of my own household." The children of God seem to talk more of their peculiar trials of mind while I have none. Surely there is a lost chord somewhere. "If ye be without chastisements, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Do such Scriptures as these apply to me! Evidence seems to point that way, yet something within me thrusts them from me, and will not accept them. Both of my parents were Old School Baptists before I was born. As soon as I knew anything at all, I was taken by them to Old Baptist meetings.

Every Sunday found them in their place, and of course, I with them, for none of us children were permitted to stay away unless in the event of its being dire necessity. Now, under such training as this, how could I turn out to be anything but an Old School Baptist! I sometimes fear my knowledge of their doctrine is all in the head and not in the heart, where it ought to be. In a very weak and unsatisfactory manner I will endeavor to lay before you what I hope has been an experience of grace in me, but will leave you to decide whether such is the case, or if it be but a wild fancy of the imagination.

Born in the month of April, 1879, near the village of Southampton, Pa., and almost under the shadow of the Old Baptist meeting-house at that place, such were the circumstances that no excuse could be found permitting me to stay away from every Sunday meeting, even in infancy. What tiresome, tedious, sonorous sermons those were to my boyish mind. When during the sermon I should lose myself in slumber, how rejoiced I would be upon awaking, to find them singing the last hymn. The pleasantest part of the meeting for me then was when the minister closed the Bible. To the best of my recollection, I never heard any other than Old Baptist preaching until about fifteen years old. Naturally, having never heard any other, I thought the Old Baptists were all right, but I could not comprehend them. While I thought their religion was a mighty good thing for them, it was not for me. They seemed above me, exalted to heights that I could never reach, nor did I care to reach them at that time. I was satisfied with myself as I was. My parents being blest with the gift of hospitality, our home was always open to the brethren far and near, so that from hearing their conversation I became intellectually familiar with the various points of their belief.

Children around me attended Sunday School, yet I never asked permission to go, knowing full well I would be met with a point blank refusal if I did, and knowing this, I never had any desire to go.

Just when I began to think of eternity and the life hereafter, I cannot say. I sometimes feared that I would die in the night. At such times I would not go to sleep lying face upward, thinking this position more than any other favored death, and might tempt the "Black Angel "to visit me. Such superstitions would haunt me at times, but would all vanish with day-dawn, and not for some time later would I have such thoughts again.

Desiring from early years to become a teacher, in the fall of 1895 I began attending a normal school in my native State, to prepare myself for the work. Here the rules were such that every student must of necessity attend service in one of the many churches of that vicinity, every Sunday morning. No Old Baptist church existing in that place, I was forced to attend other denominations, and here for the first time I heard other preaching. I recognized a difference in the preaching almost as soon as I heard it, not that I thought it was contrary to Bible teaching, but that it was more interesting to listen to, and more calculated to keep one from sleeping, than what I had formerly been accustomed to.

The week just preceding Thanksgiving was always set aside at the school as a "week of prayer." During this week the Y. M. C. A. held daily meetings for the purpose of winning converts to their cause if possible. Speakers of some reputation in the religious world were procured to address these meetings, and to play upon the emotional side of every student's temperament. The "week of prayer" in 1895 slipped by without my paying any heed to it whatever. In fact, while the Y. M. C. A. held weekly meetings throughout the year, yet I very rarely attended any of them. At least it was

noticeable to me that the very students who were the ringleaders in all the mischief going on, usually made the longest prayers and the longest speeches, but failed to act it out in their daily walk and conversation. This disgusting me, I was very seldom found at their meetings.

Uneventfully my student days passed on until the "week of prayer" in the fall of 1896. The cards issued as invitations to the meetings and scattered promiscuously among the students, bore this inscription at the top: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." – Numbers x. 29. Suddenly a determination to attend these meetings seized me. The motive that prompted me was possibly one of curiosity, as I wanted to see what effect such meetings would have upon me. Not because I realized the need of salvation did I attend these meetings, but as I have said, simply to see how such meetings were conducted, and whether I would be in any way affected by such proceedings. Thus I began attending the sessions held in the fall of 1896, of the so-called "week of prayer." At the close of the first meeting all who desired to be saved were asked to stand up. Immediately I asked myself, Shall I stand or not! Do I want to be saved or not! Why certainly, what sensible man would not want to be saved? Therefore I stood with the others. At the second meeting all who stood at the first meeting were requested to remain at the close and consult with the professor who had the matter in charge. Feeling that I now had gone too far to draw back, I remained in my place at the close of the meeting. When all who were not interested had left the room, the professor made a prayer and talked to us about what we should do to be saved. Belief, he said, was the only necessary qualification for salvation, and it was for us to say whether or not we would be saved. I was willing, I thought, to be saved, but how to make myself believe in something that I knew nothing about, I could not understand. However we were requested to sing a hymn. The one selected had for

its theme the giving of one's self to Christ, inviting him to enter and make our heart his home, &c. "I believe," "I trust," "I own," "I want," and other like expressions were scattered throughout the hymn. How can I ever express my feelings while singing this selection! Here my pen fails when it attempts to portray in black and white the revelation manifested in my soul at this time. Something said to me, "You are lying, yes, lying, and that in the face of a just and mighty God. You say you trust in his name. You do not. You say you believe that Christ died for you. You do not. You are standing up boldly in the sight of God and telling a bare faced lie." Such agony as filled my soul I can never express. Hitherto my dealings had been between man and man. Now, in the twinkling of an eye, the scene was shifted, and my dealings were between God and man. He was just and mighty, true and good, holy and undefiled. But I, what was I! Alas, a poor, wretched worm of the dust, crawling on the earth, striving in vain to seek a hole to creep into away from the fierce outburst of God's righteous indignation that had suddenly engulfed me, and was sweeping me to everlasting destruction. Yet I said it was righteous and just. I was the one that was altogether out of the way.

"And though my soul were sent to hell,
His righteous law approves, it well."

Just how long I was in this state of anguish I have never been able to remember. How I managed to get out of that meeting and to my room, I do not know, but when I did get there I threw myself upon my bed and wept long and bitterly, much to the surprise of my roommate, who became much alarmed, thinking that the meetings had worked me up to such a pitch that I was going crazy over religion. He advised me not to attend any more of the meetings, and I did not; not because I feared insanity, but because I could get no comfort there. Gradually time wore on. Instead of

getting better, I got worse, and my burden was fast becoming more than I could bear. The professor before mentioned, seeing I was under conviction, kept telling me that if I would but give myself up and believe on the name of Jesus, I would be saved. He asked me what I was waiting for! I said, "A revelation. When I see Christ and know that he died for me, then I can believe, not before." He then accused me of stubbornness, and so we parted, and never again came together in any other relation save that of teacher and pupil. At last I thought, what would I not do to be rid of this burden? O, if only Christ was my Savior. O, if he only had died for me. "Lord, thou canst if thou wilt make me clean." Now, to my mind, if relief were to come, it seemed to me it must come by a revelation, and that so vivid and so startling that I never could doubt my being saved. I had come to the place where I ceased to work, or to try to rise from the depths to which I had fallen. All my efforts had availed me nothing, so I ceased to do anything, and was waiting; waiting for what! For that revelation so startling and so sure that it would dispel all my gloom and save my soul from hell. While watching for this vision, I opened the Bible, and my eye fell upon these words, "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision: and it shall be dark unto you that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets and the day shall be dark over them." Alas, I was waiting for something that was not to come. I wanted a vision; I would have none, because the word of God coming to me with power told me I would not. Thrown down from this hope, vain as it had proved to be, I now suffered more than ever.

One night, laying upon my bed, I could not sleep. My troubles were fast getting too severe, and I verily thought they would be the death of me. They were gripping me by the throat, and I could feel my breath fast leaving me; I was dying. My mental anguish had brought on bodily suffering, and I had a raging fever. Now, surely, unless relief came,

and that quickly, I should perish, and with that it seemed to me I or something within me cried, “Peace!” In the twinkling of an eye I was at rest. All my burden had gone. Hardly realizing my state, I tried to bring back my troubles, but could not. They were gone, thank God, for ever. Happy and as free as a bird, I fell asleep and slept till morning. And now again I cannot express my joy upon awaking. . The sun never shone so brightly: all nature was at her best and rejoicing with me; I felt the power of the resurrection within and around me, and that the gift of eternal life was mine through the blessed sacrifice of God’s only begotten Son, who was offered up for me. Shout, ye heavens, and listen, O earth, Christ died for *me.* Such were my feelings at that time. Now I was not aware that there was another being on earth that had passed through what I had. Upon going home to spend a few days at Thanksgiving, I talked all the time to my parents of my feelings, and they rejoiced to see me rejoice. I soon saw that they had experienced the same things that I had. When I returned to school, I took with me a book written by our beloved pastor, Elder S. H. Durand, entitled, “Meditations on Portions of the Word.” For weeks this was all the preaching I had. I soon saw from his writings that he knew all about my feelings from having experienced the same, and I loved him. It was in this way, through hearing them preach, and reading their writings, with the understanding that I now had given me, that I came to see the Old School Baptists as the only and true church of the living God, because it all corresponded with holy writ. Knowing this I loved them because I could not help it. No other people that I have ever met could understand my feelings. Loving them, I knew I had experienced the new birth, for “We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” I did not go before the church at this time. Had I been near them when in the first flush of love, I know not what might have been the

consequence, but, as I have said, I was not near any of them, and when I did get back to where they were, doubts and fears had so assailed me that I verily thought I had been deceived, and as for being baptized, I had not thought of it. The very idea was absurd. Nevertheless I have always attended Old Baptist meetings whenever an opportunity presented itself, never having attended regular service in any other denomination since leaving school, but my unworthiness was the barrier that separated me from them. However, in the fall of 1900, while attending a yearly meeting, with the Welsh Tract Church, in Delaware, I lost sight of my unworthiness, and longed all at once to be baptized. This desire kept increasing in spite of the temptations Satan put in my way until the second Saturday in December, 1900, when at the regular church meeting at Southampton, Pa., I related my state of mind to the church. To my surprise they received me, and on the third Sunday I was baptized. Thus far the Lord hath led me on, as to the next step, I know not what it will be. I look to him to be my Guide. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

This letter is far too lengthy, and I know will sadly try your patience, so will close without more ado.

Yours in hope of eternal life,
HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 69, No. 15.
AUGUST 1, 1901.

CORRESPONDENCE 3

22 N. Fourth St., Camden, N.J., Sept. 3, 1901

Miss Bessie Durand – My Esteemed Sister In Christ: – Why should one so small as I, essay to write to you? It is only that

you may know that you are held in remembrance by those you have left behind. A loftier aim than this I cannot claim. The love of God is so great that when poured into a human heart, it cannot hold it, but must needs overflow and extend itself towards all the members of the holy family wherever they are. It is not myself, but God, that has brought you to my mind, and you have been with me all day, and now my pen only portrays in black and white the evidence that such is the case.

Brother Durand spoke ably on Sunday morning from these words, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." – Psalm xxxvii. 37. It was good. He presented Christ as the perfect man; "perfected "through suffering. His aim, mission or "end," as being the establishment of peace between his people and God – the work of reconciliation. Is it not wonderful how the Bible portrays Christ, his life and work, in every word, in every line? The Old Testament Scriptures point to it as something yet to come; the New Testament looks back to it as being finished. "Christ, and him crucified," is the soul foundation of every christian's hope. Sister Hart once said to me that she thought every true christian is a worker. True, they are. Workers not for salvation, but *because* of it. They are constantly manifesting by outward acts the salvation which God has wrought in them, for it is he that worketh in us, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Did you ever feel alone in your experience! Of course; we are all of one family, spiritually, but still our experiences do differ, and it seems that nobody goes through just what I do.

"Like one alone, I seem to be,
O, is there any one like me?"

The same plant may bear many leaves, yet no two are exactly alike, and although we are all branches of the same vine (Christ), yet no two are exactly alike. How easily it is to

mistake the workings of the Spirit for what we think is merely carnal promptings, and *vice versa.* I know that I have sometimes told my feelings to a brother or sister and then asked them is that of God or of the flesh? and to my surprise they say, "God." Well, I cannot always see it that way. Not that I doubt their sincerity, but I fear they have not understood my feeble utterances.

Not since coming within the borders of the visible church, have I been able to devote much of my time to anything but the Bible or SIGNS. The newspaper takes no more than five minutes daily. I do not always enjoy the Bible, or the SIGNS either. Indeed, the former is more often sealed than unsealed, it seems to me. Nevertheless, I cannot leave it alone even then. One time during this last spring, I became much disturbed in my mind over my comparative ignorance as to current events, and things in the world around me. I have always been a great reader, but the Bible had superseded everything else, and being thrown in contact with well read people daily, I thought it behooved me to brush up on literary topics of the day. Feeling thus, I one evening walked around to the Public Library here, in which I hold a reader's card, with the intention of reviving my interest in current topics; determining to read my Bible less, and history and fiction more. One book after another I removed from the shelves, scanning their leaves only to find "vanity and vexation of spirit" written upon every page. Something said within me, "You must not; you must not." Discouraged I retraced my steps homeward. Entering the house, I picked up a Bible lying on the table and opening it at random, read. Ah, here at last was something worth my time and thought. My eyes were glued to the page as I read chapter after chapter. The Bible never seemed sweeter to me than at this time. Closing it at last, I resolved that nothing but the Bible should engross my time, so when I am approached on subjects that are engrossing the public mind, I simply say, "I

do not know," and though they may think me a fool on account of my ignorance, yet I have the comforting assurance that we have become fools for Christ's sake.

Now, my dear sister, I will not further take up your time. If you can find it in your heart to answer this, do so; but I know your time is much taken up, and will try not to feel disappointed if you do not write me. Trust we will again soon have the privilege of you being with us at Sonthampton.

With much love, I desire to be yours in the bonds of love, HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 70, No. 10.
May 15, 1902

CORRESPONDENCE 4

Philadelphia, Pa., Jan., 1903.

Mrs. L. C. Ray – My Dear Sister In Christ: – As I read over your last letter to me, I find it is dated September 27th; really I did not know that I had owed you a letter for so long a time, and am now ashamed of myself for not having written sooner. I have been so barren and destitute of all spirituality that had I written I doubt if it would have been of much account. Even now the only reason why I start this letter is because I feel that I must write to you, however worthless the outcome may be, and not because I have any great message to deliver.

I am glad you have met brother Fetter, and have been privileged to enjoy his company; he is a very estimable brother. I am glad you have enjoyed such a feast of fat things, both in New Mexico and at the Trinity River Association. By this time I trust the memory of it still lingers sweetly with you, though you may have forgotten in detail

many of the precious things that were said. We are sometimes discouraged because we cannot carry in our memory more of the things that we hear, and reflect upon them at later times. Once in a long while we can do this, but for one idea that we retain in this way, there are a dozen or more that we let slip. I cannot call to mind at this instant just what I had for my dinner on Monday; it is not needful that I remember it; if the food then partaken of has been digested and assimilated into my physical makeup, this is the prime necessity. Just so with the sermons we hear, we rejoice in them at the time we hear them, are built up thereby, strengthened, encouraged and refreshed; this is all that is necessary. It is not needful for us to retain in memory a single idea for to-morrow, or the line of thought of a sermon; if we have partaken of the heavenly manna to-day, to-morrow will bring us a fresh supply, and we cannot carry to-day's provisions to a future time and make it minister unto our future needs. "Give us this day our daily bread," is the prayer voiced by the spiritual man. "After this manner therefore pray ye," said the Savior. No prayer indited in the heart by the Spirit of God is fruitless, but will be answered according to the petition. The prayer so inspired is in harmony with God's will, and asks only for that which he is willing to bestow upon us, therefore every true prayer is prophetic, and is answered in Christ before the lips or heart frame the petition. So if Jesus commands his disciples to pray in this manner: "Give us this day our daily bread," it amounts to a promise, and coming from such a source is in substance an assurance that his people will daily be fed with bread from heaven. It may not always be the bread that our nature will want to eat. We may sometimes draw back and rebel against our daily allotment. It is all very nice and pleasant when our share is the bread of prosperity and gladness; it is quite the reverse when it is the bread of adversity; but we cat both alike nevertheless, being made

willing in the day of his power. There is not a true christian on the face of the earth at this moment but desires to be at all times in communion with Christ, not forgetting that there is but one way of coming into such a communion, and that one way is “through much tribulation;” that alone is the gate of heaven. If we would reign with Christ, we must also suffer with him. The Savior is ever present with us; he never leaves or forsakes us, and never will; he is the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. If I am a child of God, then is he with me now? Certainly so, for his people are his dwelling-place. Then why can I not apprehend his presence? I reach out my hands, but they only grasp the air. I search with my eyes and understanding, but cannot find him. I listen with my ears for his footfall, but silence reigns supreme. If he be present why can I not touch him? Because he is removed beyond the reach of our finite mind and sense, yet is ever near us; but a flimsy veil separates us from him. In the twinkling of an eye the slender thread that binds us to earth might be severed, and in an instant we would stand before him in his unveiled glory, seeing him as he is and being like him. Ah, but is there no way of touching him while we are still here in this mortal state? Yes. How! He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. That poor soul who is lamenting his uncleanness, his haltness and his blindness, crying out in his despair, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” is touching the High Priest. In the sufferings on account of sin and creature weakness, his people touch the Son of God, their elder Brother. This is communing with Christ, and such communing not being carried to heaven on flowery beds of ease; so that to commune with him means to go through the refining fires of the furnace of affliction, to be purged of our dross, to be made conformable to his imago unto which his people were predestinated before the foundation of the world.

My mind was a blank when I began this letter to you, and I was at a loss as to what subject I should touch upon, but as I have been led so I have written, and hope something may present itself to you in a comfortable way.

A new year has begun, and I hope the God of all mercies, the Giver of every perfect gift, will he with you throughout its changing scenes, and sanctify you wholly by his presence for his name's sake. Amen.

With christian love and fellowship, I am yours in a precious bond,
HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 74, No. 8
April 15, 1906

CORRESPONDENCE 5

Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 24, 1903.

Dear Editor: – For over three years I have had in my possession two letters written me by Elder John McConnell. Several times I have read them over, and each time have been instructed and edified. Just a few days ago I got them out and read them again, and feel that now I must share them with all the spiritual household. They need to be read and reread, and that very carefully, if one would derive the full benefit of their contents, for there is a great deal more in them than will appear from a mere casual reading. I leave them to your better judgment.

Wishing you at all times the enjoyment of divine presence in your labors for us, I am, I hope, your brother in gospel fellowship,

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

NEW YORK, N. Y., April 26, 1902.

Dear Brother Horace H. Lefferts: – Your welcome letter of the 23rd inst. is at hand. Your acceptance of an appointment here for next second Sunday will be gratifying to all the members and friends, and I can promise you a hearty welcome from them all. I am glad you are so fearful of making a failure; as long us you feel that way you and can keep step along the way, and I hope you will never grow more confident of your sufficiency. Lack of confidence in self is always the accompaniment of true liberty, where the Spirit of the Lord is, and I am sure you will live to know that a door of utterance is opened for you, in the power of the gospel, when you have thought your speaking was a failure. I do not like to make failures any more than you do, but I have had assurances that the Lord gave me a word of comfort to some when I was under the impression I had made a miserable failure. I have sat down more than once, humiliated and crushed with shame, and I expect it will occur again. I am sorry I cannot be here with you, that time is my appointment at Warwick. I will write you later concerning the arrangements for coming; it is so convenient to come from Philadelphia that your business affairs need not be interfered with.

In reading over your letter I could not but compare you with myself, and envy your experience. In a year you have been taught and learned what has taken me so many long and weary years to attain to. My understanding is very limited yet, and it seems such a pity that so long a time should he required to understand the A, B, C, of the gospel. I often wonder why all should not be taught in the same way. I hear brethren preach, no two alike, and I envy their ability; how happy I would be if I could only dwell in the top of the mountain as some of them do: how delightful it would be to

have my heart and voice attuned to the singing of birds; but there is little of (hat with me: very few high and lofty notes in my song. A ministering brother once said to me that in speaking I was inclined to take my hearers down into the dark places and leave them there, and I ought to try and overcome that disposition. Unfortunately for me, the low places are where I dwell most of the time, and no one wants company more than I do, and if I can find any one to travel with me there, I have attained to the greatest height of happiness I know of. If I have attained to any understanding at all in the doctrine of God our Savior, it has been through suffering. All the joy and comfort I have ever known have come in that experience, so naturally I cannot talk about anything but the way that comfort has been ministered. I often covet the aptness of some to comprehend and appropriate truth when they hear it preached. I will agree that it is the truth, but my feeling of belief that it is the truth does not satisfy me, I want to know it for myself in an experience, and the only way a satisfying, comforting hope has ever been given me has been in suffering.

When I lived in Philadelphia I talked very glibly about God's sovereignty, predestination and election. I was credited with being quite wise, but O how little I knew the truth of them then. I know little of it now, but that little is of far more comfort than all theory and notion could afford. In these days I delighted in the meetings, loved to hear preaching, and it was happiness to associate with the brethren, but there was little exercise of mind concerning my title to an inheritance with the saints. I talked about trials and temptations as necessary evils in the christian's travel, but I knew little about it; at least I did not know Satan when he appeared, for he always was clothed as an angel of light. But the time came when my weakness and frailty were made known to me, and in a temptation so deceitful and reasonable that I was overcome; Satan showed me great things and promised

me a “time salvation” if I would but serve him; it came about in this way: As a realization of weakness increased upon me I began to question and doubt the goodness of my hope, instead of getting better and stronger as I had expected to, I found the contrary my experience; this was wrong I felt, and I wanted to know the cause. Reason suggested that my ills were only such as are common to all men, wicked and righteous alike, as discomforts inseparable from the nature of man, and that I ought to be resigned to the inevitable. Resignation then appeared to me as a virtue that could and should be cultivated. The conclusion I arrived at was, that while it was decreed man could not avoid the evils which his nature was heir to, yet it was his duty to do the best he could, and in the consciousness of doing so his sorrows would be lightened. It did not then occur to me that God absolutely controlled all things, not only the visitation, but also the endurance, and that I was trying to live a doctrine of “time salvation.” I did not realize that to limit God in any degree was to deny his sovereignty; I forgot that he numbers the very hairs of our head, and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. There was no acknowledgment of his sovereignty in my heart, saying, “Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.” But the time came when I hope the Lord made me to see that everything I experienced was at his hand: that my thoughts were not my own: that my questions were told me: that my heaviness of spirit, sorrow of heart and all my temptations were ministered unto me in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings. Then I thanked God I was not able to practice resignation, and that no condition of obedience would alleviate suffering; but that sorrow would increase with increasing strength and knowledge, that it was given me in the behalf of Christ to suffer for his sake.

In my early efforts to be resigned to suffering I tried to console myself with thoughts of future joy and blessedness for’ all my suffering here. In a certain sense there may be

comfort in such anticipation, but alone it can never be perfect consolation; to be perfect it needs a solid foundation. A promise of future happiness is of no value to me if the one who promises it gives no proof of his power and good will in this present life. As Almighty, nothing can prevent or cause our God to forego this manifestation, lie makes known his judgments here, and if we are not given to know them now, our hope of future blessedness is unsafely founded. If sin is not already the ruin of Adam's race, then there exists no hell, and if salvation docs not accompany righteousness already here, then there exists no heaven. The future is not the beginning. God is not inactive, and he never will attain to a better will or greater power than now. He is from beginning to end the living God, and not a god who only rises to power when this life has ended. A god who has any more work to do, who has anything to make good again, is no god at all. His just recompense of reward for evil as well as good is the everlasting song of the redeemed, and Jesus himself, in describing the blessedness of these who renounce all for his sake, begins with the present life. These views may not suit everybody, but I love the doctrine of a present salvation in an experience of the power of Christ resting upon us in our weakness: that Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God: that this suffering is the knowledge that Christ is come in the flesh, and in his appearing our salvation is manifest, this is knowing Jesus, seeing him for ourself, and being like him. The best of it all is, there is no condition attached to all this; we have nothing but what is given us. It is appointed that we shall fall into temptation; sometimes strong delusions are sent us, and frequently we try to walk in the light of the sparks of the Are we have kindled in an effort to escape from darkness; but all these things the Lord hath commanded, that we may know he alone is God; that we are insufficient of ourselves in everything. Our lying down in sorrow is an ascription of highest power to him; in causing us

to be ashamed for all our ways he shows us his covenant; we are in possession of the hidden treasures of darkness, which he promises his people, when we are enduring temptation, and in this experience we are manifestly receiving eternal life. In this trial of our faith Jesus appears crowned with honor and glory.

When I commenced writing I meant a short letter: one page, not five. I hope I have said nothing you cannot fellowship, for I love this doctrine. I desire to know nothing save Christ crucified: no reigning with him except we suffer with him. I want to believe, and I think I do, that all things, of whatsoever nature they may be, in our life, work together for our good: that the life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, and whatever transpires in this life which we now live in the flesh is according to the pleasure and will of God, and will result to his honor, praise and glory.

Affectionately your brother in gospel bonds,
JOHN McCONNELL.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Aug., 1902.

Dear Brother Horace Lefferts: – Expecting to see you last Sunday in Philadelphia I have delayed writing you longer than I otherwise would have done. I trust your visit at Hopewell was comforting to you and others. Your appointment here for the second Sunday in August has been published for several Sundays past, and the brethren and friends are anticipating much pleasure in meeting you again. Your last appointment here was profitable and comforting to the church, and the desire is general for you to visit us often. If I know my own heart the gospel you preach is what I want to be found diligently proclaiming.

Of late years there have arisen among our people some preachers who are inclined to mix works with the doctrine of grace; we hear too much about man's power to obey, and less of God's sovereignty.

I like to hear, in no uncertain way, that there is no power in man by nature, in and of himself, to hear, much less obey the commandments of God, or the exhortations contained in Scripture. To contend that we have any power in ourselves to think a good thought, or do the least thing as we ought, or to believe or obey the gospel savingly in the slightest degree, is to overthrow the gospel and the faith of God's elect in all ages. Not long ago I read in a so-called Old School Baptist paper that it would be unrighteous in God to require obedience of us if there was in us no power to obey; and that it would be unjust to eternally condemn one for this inability. The writer was intent on upholding the doctrine of "conditional time salvation." But Scripture does not assert anywhere that man's destruction is due to weakness or disability; on the contrary, it states positively that condemnation is due to willful sin. Man's destruction is but the fruit of his own ways. Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." There is a free and positive act of their will in disobedience, and they but act out the nature of the children of disobedience.

I would not for the world refrain from exhorting the brethren as to what manner of men we ought to be, yet I know that in myself, and in them, there is no power to do the things we would. It is not for me to accommodate the commands of God to man's ability, but to declare in no uncertain Sound that without holiness shall no man see God. I find no authority in holy writ to exhort others concerning what they can do, but I do find warrant to exhort as to what we ought to do. To preach that we are of ourselves able to do the things we ought to do is to utterly ignore the grace of God, or

at least to give grace glory only for partial assistance. The truth is that obedience is the first fruit of the new creation, the saints are possessed of life which is "of God." The fullness of that life dwells in Christ, and of his fullness have we received, for he communicates it unto us by his Spirit. Without him, without that life, we can do nothing; that life precedes every vital act. There is no obedience but such as is the manifestation of it. "I live; yet not I, but. Christ liveth in me." He is the life, and without him we can do nothing.

Conditionalists make great play on the word "duty." It is a word that is much misunderstood. Spiritually defined it is very unlike the natural understanding of it. In life naturally, duty calls us often to do things we have distaste for, but not so spiritually. We do not enter into the kingdom of God's dear Son by duty, by obedience, or by any other act whatsoever. The very principle of life spiritually is hatred of evil and love of righteousness. Salvation itself is the manifestation of God's choosing us that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. When we say, "I would do good," it is not our will naturally that says so, so much as it is the will of God that speaks. That will is written in our heart, and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and this experience is obedience unto the will of God. Obedience to the will of God is always and solely due to the effectual working of his grace in us to will and to do. We receive no life or salvation for doing these things, but in doing them there is great reward.' Our calling and election are not simply to a future of everlasting bliss and felicity, but is now manifest in the subjects of grace as chosen to be holy; called not to uncleanness, but to holiness; and I have noticed that these who say the preaching of man's impotency tends to excuse an evil life are not much affected by the plague of their own heart. Establishment in the doctrine of God's sovereignty, election, predestination, and the total depravity of man, has a very different effect. I have also noticed that the least

infringement on this doctrine by the judgment of man manifests a conditionalist. To limit in the least degree the predestination of God is to deny him power, wisdom and every attribute he possesses. I believe and love the truth of predestination. I cannot limit it in any degree without denying my hope in the mercy of God. To me it means that the will, purpose, counsel and decree of God embrace? all things; that whatsoever cometh to pass, the Lord commanded; that all things, of whatsoever nature they may be, glorify him and exalt his wisdom. I firmly believe in the predestination of all things, not simply of all good things, but also of what I may judge to be evil things. God willed the existence of sin, that he might communicate himself to us in a manner inconceivable to the natural mind. He willed it as an occasion to bring forth the mystery of the incarnation and suffering of his Son, our Savior. His holiness forbids his willing its existence as an end; but in regard to his wisdom he willed it as an occasion to draw good out of things which in their own nature are contrary to good. How wonderful such wisdom is!

The greatest blessing the world was ever blessed with, was ushered in by the lust of man. The first promise of a Savior (Gen. iii. 15,) came by the sin of Adam. The sufferings of the dear Redeemer were occasioned by the rage and malice of these he came to save. From the very sin of man and the malice of Satan has been erected to the everlasting glory of God a new creation of all things by Jesus Christ. Lust inspired man to seek his own gratification in the death of Christ, yet the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ordered it thus to accomplish his own design of redemption. By the occasion of man’s fall a way was opened to raise him to a more excellent condition: in the loss of an earthly paradise the way was opened for the finding a heavenly place. The violation of the old covenant introduced a better; the loss of our own righteousness ushered in a more enduring

righteousness, everlasting. Had not the wisdom of God predestinated the entrance of sin in the world some attributes of God would never be experimentally known: grace would be unknown to us. Our love to him could not be so strong had we no enemy to hate for his sake. Humility would have no growth, and godly sorrow no fuel. Even our falling into temptation is predestinated to our good. When we remember his covenant we are ashamed for all our ways, and flee for refuge to the throne of grace. The pleasures of sin do not entice; we remember the time of our first love and say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now." – Hosea ii. 7. When we trust and have confidence in our own strength, God lets loose corruption to show us and make us sensible of our weakness, and where our sufficiency is. We would never remember we have an Advocate without some sensible, necessity. God orders the hostile acts of sin to increase our hatred of it, for the deeper our humiliation the greater our abhorrence of it. We find by our calamity that the enemy has more strength against us than we suspected, and it causes us to watch and pray the more earnestly that we enter not into temptation.

How incomprehensible is the wisdom of God in the management of evil! How wonderfully he brings forth beauty and discovery of himself out of the greatest contrarieties, making evil serve to show us his glory. If evil were not in the world, we could not know what good is; as without night we could not know the beauty of the day.

God is not the author of sin, because of his holiness, yet in his wisdom he predestinates sin and accomplishes his own purposes by the iniquities of his enemies. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is growing in a sense of infirmity and weakness, and God is glorified in his saints. They are made

to say, Of myself I can do nothing: all our works are wrought in us. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever Amen.”

The few minutes I intended to write have overrun two hours, but I will not often try your patience thus. I wish you could be here for to-morrow and relieve me of the heaviness I feel in anticipating the two services before me. My mind is destitute of anything that can be profitable to the people, and it is also destitute of any hope that my discernment will be any better tomorrow. I wish I could look forward to my appointments eagerly as some do, but I cannot, their approach is a burden and grief to me, for of all that speak in the name of the Lord I am the least profitable servant, if one at all. I love to meet the brethren, but to serve them I am not worthy. I want your fellowship in everything except the realization of an unprofitable ministry.

In love and fellowship I am, I hope, your brother in gospel bonds,
JOHN McCONNELL.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 78., No. 24.
DECEMBER 15, 1905.

CORRESPONDENCE 6

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Feb. 19, 1905.

Dear Editor Of The SIGNS, And brethren: – Some time ago brother Everett R. Kinney, of Glens Falls, N. Y., wrote requesting my views on Hebrews ix. 28, as submitted by me to the church of Albany and Troy, Sunday morning,

November 27th, 1904, at the lied Men's Hall in Troy, N. Y. This is not by any means an easy thing to do, and I have been trying my very best to forget his request, not because I wished to ignore it altogether, but the task is entirely too big a one for me to handle as it deserves. One thing I cannot do, and I may as well confess it at the start, I cannot reproduce here the sermon of that Sunday morning in November in Troy to the very attentive brethren gathered there; I will not attempt such an impossibility. The best that I can do is to state here my present view of this subject, nor am I aware that this has in any way changed since the time referred to. Much controversy has occupied the mind of many able men, both in and out of the gospel, as to the second coming of Christ: what it is, how it is, and when it is. Truth can alone hush babbling tongues and soothe us with the assurance of what it really is. The words in Hebrews ix. 28, are these: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." If I want to know the real truth about this matter, I would rely upon the testimony of these who have thus looked for Christ, and unto whom he has appeared unto salvation; these could certainly tell me about it; none others possibly could. To be more definite, I would go to these who have experienced these things; experience is the only key to the understanding of divine things. The natural mind cannot help us any, it is enmity against God. Sin to be understood, must be experienced; salvation to be understood, must be experienced; the second coming of Christ to be understood, must be experienced. Is this last a matter of present experience with the saints? Undoubtedly, yes, and just as certainly, No. I will endeavor to explain what I mean before I am through.

This ninth chapter of Hebrews, as well as the entire letter, is a connected whole, and to be rightly understood must be so handled. The apostle uses the things of the Old Testament to

illustrate the things of the New, he shows here the Old Testament was dedicated with blood, likewise the New; he brings to our mind this truth, that "a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." A man may make his will leaving all his possessions to his heirs and discriminating among them as he chooses, but as long as the man lives, his will thus written is only so much paper, no more. In order for the conditions in the written document to be fulfilled, the man must die: by his death the paper becomes a thing of power, it maketh rich or poor, according to its contents. In order for the will of God to be made known unto his heirs, Immanuel (God with us) must die. As Moses dedicated the law with the blood of calves, and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, so did God dedicate unto his children the gospel in the blood of his only begotten Son. Every heir of God is judged in this New Testament just as in a man-made testament, or will, the father judges each of his heirs. Not until the father dies, can the children know how the father has judged them. His death however looses the seal, the will is opened, unto all the heirs it becomes known what the father has apportioned unto each.

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Some have thought this to refer to a final day of judgment some time in the future when the world shall come to an end. To read such a meaning in these words would be to disconnect it entirely from the theme which the apostle is here considering. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," is a decree of God, and concerns all men. After the fulfillment of this decree, then comes the judgment. What judgment? That which is in their wills concerning their heirs, or whoever is interested therein. As I have before said, after a man dies, and not till then, his will is opened and the judgment which he has written there is made known.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” As all men die in obedience to the decree of God, so Christ also died. Why? That the new covenant which was in him from the Father, might be made known unto all the heirs. There are many things in this New Testament of our God made forcible in the death of the man Christ Jesus.

“It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” What more do we want? Having, therefore, shed his precious blood that the will of God might be secured unto all the children, he will appear the second time unto them that look for him, without sin unto salvation. His first appearance was with sin, his second, without sin. “He hath made him to be sin for us.” “God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” This first appearance of Christ as being made sin for us, considered as a separate and distinct event in time, occurred during all the time of his sojourn here as a man. Considered experimentally, his first appearance is in the law, as it is consciously applied unto ever quickened sinner and causes him to know his errors, his wickedness, his condemnation. This first appearance of Jesus is always one of condemnation. The second appearance of Jesus is unto salvation, apart from sin. The experience of this is one of love mid joy and the losing sight of one’s iniquities for the time being. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” Experiencing this, is to know Jesus at his second coining. When speaking unto his disciples of his approaching death, he promised them the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which should be their guide, teacher and reminder. If this is not the second coining of Christ, then I do not know what is. It certainly is the messenger of the new covenant which comes unto every heir of God wherever he is and in whatever condition he may he, searching him out, bearing witness with his spirit that lie is a child of God, that he is interested in the will of his heavenly Father, and

apprising him of what is his Father's will concerning him. It makes known unto us the judgment of God concerning us, and we do not have to die the death of the body in order to find it out, but Christ died this death in order that we should find it out; these blessings are hinged upon his death, not ours. This coming of the Holy Ghost unto us as a Comforter, Instructor, Guide, *&c,* is unto every one that looks for him. With what eyes do they look? With the eyes of faith, of course. They hunger and thirst for righteousness, looking for a new heaven and a new earth, weary of sin, they long to be delivered from it; unto such comes the Holy Ghost without sin unto salvation, apprising them of their purity before God, of their eternal blessings in Christ. You see how, therefore, this second coining of Christ is a matter of present experience, and yet it is not. What I have said above, presents it as a matter of every day life with the children of God who dwell in the fullness of the gospel. We do not yet know what it is to conquer the grave, to triumph over death, but, by the grace of God, we will some day know this, each for ourselves, and then will we also know the fullness of Christ's second coming, which is unto salvation.

Now I have told you all I know about it.
Yours to serve in the gospel,
HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 73, No. 7
April 1, 1905

CORRESPONDENCE 7

Warwick, N. Y., Nov. 25, 1907.

Dear Sister Huntt: – You request me to write you with regard to some things in the twenty-third Psalm. This Psalm is a

most precious bit of Scripture, and has often been a comfort to many of the Lord's people.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters." One cannot lead another unless he goes before. Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, is the forerunner of his people. They never are called to go but where he has already been. "Still waters "signify waters that are quiet, peaceful and deep. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God." This river, which is the water of life, flows from the throne of God and the Lamb; that is, it issues forth from the place of his power and dominion and is sent forth by his decree. Those who drink of this shall never thirst again (for earthly water), but it will subdue their murmurings and unrest, thus making them quiet, and will afford them a rest and peace which the world cannot bestow nor withdraw. But the stillness of these waters also shows they are deep. Nothing can be deeper or more mysterious than God's plans and purposes, his ways and thoughts. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! "This water of life which God gives to his people is full of his rich wisdom, his rich knowledge, his unsearchable judgments and his mysterious ways, therefore it is deep water; and still, because it is deep. It is babes and sucklings that are hither led, not grown men. These things are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes; they are to the weak, not the strong; to the foolish, not the wise; to the self-conscious sinner, not the boasting Pharisee.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Pastures are feeding-places for the sheep. Green signifies new, fresh and living. To lie down signifies contentment and satisfaction. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the pasture in which the sheep of the great Shepherd feed and lie down, it contains such nourishment and food as hungry sinners need. The

gospel is green; that is, it is always new, always fresh, and is full of life; there is no death in it. Whenever this glorious news is proclaimed in the heart of a tempest-tossed and trial-ridden sinner it suddenly makes him contented, happy and satisfied, for it says: "It is I, be not afraid." We do not lie down of ourselves, but he maketh us to lie down, but it is in such a sweet, compelling way that we do not realize at the time that we are being forced into it. He constrains us by love, and moves us by the Spirit's indwelling, to lie down and be happy, contented and satisfied in what he has prepared for us. Such as has been given unto me, give I unto you.

Yours in love of Jesus' name,
HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 76., No. 22.
NOVEMBER 15, 1908.

DESOLATION – THE WORK OF THE LORD.

"COME, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." – Psalms xlvi. 8.

Peculiar notions float in the minds of most men as to what constitute the works of the Lord. The shining of the sun and of the moon, the blossoming of trees and flowers, the falling of the snow and the rain, the singing of birds, the blowing of the wind, the birth of a child, the bestowal of happiness and of prosperity, all these most people would say are the works of God; but when it comes to the reverse of all these pleasant and cheerful things, to the things that produce pain or sorrow, death or disease, these things most people prefer to ascribe to some other power than that of God. The truth is, that all these things come from the Lord, both those things that bring peace in their train as well as those things

that leave a streak of fire behind them. War, famine and pestilence are a trio that go together, and rarely ever are separated; where we find one we are very apt to be able to discover the other two. A terrific world war has just spent its force in taking its terrible toll of the blood and treasure of the nations. Accompanying this whirlwind of destruction and following upon the heels of it comes famine, taking its toll of precious lives throughout Europe and Asia, many persons starving to death for lack of the wherewithal to sustain life. Probably even in our own land, and perhaps not far from our very doors, scores, and maybe hundreds, are suffering for the lack of the necessities of life. Hard upon war and famine comes the third of the trio: disease, or pestilence. The present epidemic of influenza raging all over the United States is really a pandemic, because it is worldwide, prevailing in the countries of the old world as well as here. The total of those who succumb to the pestilence will exceed in number the victims of the war. Thus we find ourselves in this present generation living in the midst of these monsters of destruction, things we have all read about in the history of the past, but which we ourselves hardly expected to see for ourselves. These are not the agencies or instruments of Satan, they are the works of the Lord. As it has been in the past, so it is now, and so shall it ever be as long as this old world remains constituted and organized as it is. The Lord in the days of Noah saved eight. persons in the ark from the Hood; all others living at that time were swallowed up in the deluge. Many people expressed themselves during the last four years that this war was the worst thing that has ever come to pass, but we think they must have forgotten about the Hood in the days of Noah, which desolation must have been terrible to those who perished in it, but which nevertheless was the work of God. Again, what desolation was that which God wrought when he overwhelmed Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, thus delivering his own elect

people. Again, what desolation was the work of God when the earth opened and swallowed those who replied against Moses and Aaron, and two hundred and fifty men who offered incense were consumed by fire from the Lord. The word of the Lord by Ezekiel declares, "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the Lord have spoken it." You will notice it is not Satan who says this, but the Lord himself. In the ninth chapter of Ezekiel we have the vision given the prophet of the slaying to occur in Jerusalem: to six men who came from the way of the higher gate with slaughter weapons in their hands, the Lord commanded, "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women." This is by no means the only place in the Bible where the Lord commanded the killing of women and children. The Lord is not only a God of construction, but also of destruction; he both kills and makes alive as he sees tit.

But let us come to the forty-sixth Psalm and consider the desolation there spoken of. The first thing mentioned as being destroyed is war: "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth." And, by the way, the Lord is the only being that can effectually make an end of war. Some doubt the success of the attempt that is being made to make war obsolete. The world to-day is trying to devise a league of nations to establish world-wide peace. We hope for success. This plan may not succeed, and we do not have to be a prophet to make such a statement. One needs only to carefully read the Scriptures to learn there that God alone is the author of peace, and that only the peace of God can endure forever. As long as human nature is what it is, and as long as the governments of the nations are organized as they are, there can be no worldwide permanent peace. However, the Psalm says that to the ends of the earth the Lord makes wars to cease. This does not convey the idea that God makes

wars to cease all over the earth, but to the ends of the earth. The ends of the earth are the Lord's people. Every subject of God's grace is brought to the end of all earthly things, to the end of his strength, to the end of his wisdom, to the end of all confidence in himself or in the flesh. Thus, by the revelation of God's Spirit, the sinner finds he is full of all that is earthly, sensual and vain, and that there is no hope of salvation coming through the help or power of man. He finds the end of a man, and that the end of a man is vanity. This, the end of a man, is the end of the earth. Here is where the war ceases. Whereas before the sinner was fighting against God, at war with heaven and in league with hell, now by the work of the Son of God, and the death which Jesus suffered, this war or opposition against God is ended, and he is reconciled to God through the mediatorial work of the Redeemer. This is the war that ceases, and it ceases only to those who have been brought to the end of the earth. He takes from us all our weapons of warfare so that we can no longer struggle against him. "He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." The reason many believe that their works save them is because they have never experienced the destruction of their weapons of war at the hands of the Lord. No one can believe in salvation by works who has witnessed the Lord making wars to cease to the end of the earth. The Lord strips the sinner of all his works, he humbles his pride in the dust, he destroys all self-confidence and all line spun theories and philosophies which have for their aim the elevation of the creature in the place of the Creator. It is no wonder the Lord's people believe wholly in salvation by grace, for the Lord has wrought a work of desolation in them, a work in which he has destroyed their spears and bows and chariots, so that they no longer can trust in their own defences, but must be still and know that he is God. No one is ever still, that is, ceasing his own ineffectual efforts, until the Lord

makes him to be still, and creates within him the knowledge of God, through the destruction of all creature fortresses and self-sufficiency. The Lord destroys as he builds up. There is no such thing as growing in grace without at the same time growing out of self. In order to be built up in the faith that is God's elect's one must have had faith in one's own self destroyed. Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, but one never waits upon the Lord until he gets to that place where he can no longer wait upon himself. This, for that one, is the end of earth. Here every vain imagination is cast down, every idol shattered; the sinner is abject in the dust, wholly surrendered to the King of heaven, for God has destroyed all his weapons whereby he might longer fight, and has consumed all his strength, so that he could not fight had he still the weapons. Thus does God exalt himself among the heathen. One who is an unbeliever in God is a heathen, whether he dwell in Asia, Africa, Europe or America. None can convert the heathen but God himself. He does it through the operation of the Holy Spirit and the revealing power thereof in the soul and the life of the one who is a heathen. Self, and all the things of self: the mind and the will and the affections of self, are abased, that God shall be all in all. This is the way God exalts himself among the heathen. It is through these bitter things that God's people are taught to lie passive in his hand and know no will but his. Thus comes into the soul that final abolition of all war, the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that the world can neither give nor take away. Experimentally, God's people are taught that God's glory is advanced through their self-abasement. That which is exalted must be abased, and that which is abased must be exalted. God's plan of salvation leads downward instead of upward, downward into the abysmal depths of self-knowledge, that one may know what is the height of that wisdom and knowledge that is of God. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 3
February 1, 1919

DIVORCE.

ELDER J. W. McClanahan, of West Virginia, asks our views on divorce. We know of no better way to comply with his request than to turn to the Bible and cite I what it says upon this subject. What the Bible says should be final and satisfactory with every Old School Baptist. first, then, we turn to the Mosaic law, and in Deut. xxiv. 1, 2, we find this; "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." Thus we see that the Jews under the Mosaic law were allowed to divorce their wives and were allowed to marry again, also, divorce could be granted for any or "some uncleanness." There were no restrictions as to just what this uncleanness might be. We cite this in the law of Moses, not because it is of special importance to the church now, because the church is not under law, but under grace, therefore not bound by the law of Moses at all, but we call attention to what the law says on divorce to contrast it with what Jesus said, to which we now turn. In Matthew v. 31, 32, the words of Jesus are, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." Here Jesus negatives the commandment of Moses as cited in the

beginning of our article, and says that a wife shall not be put away by her husband, that is, divorced, except on the one ground of fornication. To put her away for any other cause is adultery, or to marry one so put away is adultery. Again, in Matt. xix. 8, 9, Jesus says, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whose marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Here Jesus in addition to what he has said in Matthew, fifth chapter, adds that if the man who puts away his wife marries another, he, too, commits adultery, as well as the man who marries the woman put away. Now, further, in Mark x. 11, 12, Jesus says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Again, in . Luke xvi. 18: "Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." These words of Jesus are conclusive, and settle the matter as to the proper attitude of his church respecting divorce. Jesus is head of the church, and the only lawgiver in Zion. While Moses allowed divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons, Jesus contradicts all that, as he did so many other things in the law, and for the church of Jesus Christ there is no choice left her as to which is right to pursue: the commandment of Moses or the law of Christ. We say the church has no choice in this matter, for she is not under law, but under grace, and is bound to abide by the law of her King, Jesus. To do other than this, and to take Moses' word as our authority in church matters, is to "fall from grace" and to recede to the weak and beggarly elements from which we have been redeemed. The words of Jesus are clear and plain

and admit of but one construction, that is, a man may for the cause of fornication put away his wife, or divorce her, but neither of them can marry again during the lifetime of the other or they commit adultery. Should any brother or sister in the church be divorced from their wife or husband for fornication, that is all right, but should either of them, or both, marry again, they cannot be retained in church fellowship, for they have committed adultery, and the rule is: "Not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." – 1 Cor. v. 11.

We have simply given the commandment of Jesus and of his apostle Paul upon this subject. We have no views of our own other than what Jesus says. His words are final and right in all matters pertaining to the doctrine and practice of the church. If any are disposed to quarrel with what we have said here, they cannot be satisfied with what Jesus said, for we have simply repeated what he said. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times

Volume 84, No. 7.

April 1, 1916

EASTER.

SISTER N. S. Stevens, of Daisy, Arkansas, wants to know about Easter: is it the day Christ rose from the grave? Why is it not the same day of the month and the same month of the year, like Christmas?

Easter is mentioned but once in the Bible, in Acts xii. 4. Herod Agrippa the first, father of the Agrippa before whom Paul later made his stirring defense, as told in Acts xxvi., stretched forth his hands to vex the church of God, killed James, the brother of John, seized Peter and cast him into prison. It being the time of the feast of unleavened bread when Peter was arrested, Herod, though not a Jew himself, was politician enough to know that the Jews would not care to enter into judgment with Peter during their festive season, so kept him in confinement, intending to bring him forth after Easter, or after the passover week of unleavened bread. The word here translated Easter is, in the original Greek, Pascha, and literally means the passover, not having any reference whatever to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The Jewish passover was eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year,'and, for seven days therefrom, was the feast of unleavened bread. Roughly speaking, this corresponds to our month of April. When Christ ate of the passover with his disciples on the evening of the day before his crucifixion, that day must have been the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, therefore the date of his resurrection would be the first day of the week next following. In other words, Christ rose from the dead on the 17th of *Abib*, or *Nisan*, as it was renamed after the captivity. This is most certainly a fixed date, the same as was the date of his birth, and not a movable date, as the date of Easter now is as observed by the so-called christian sects of the world. This observance of Easter by the religions of the World as at present engaged in under the pretense of celebrating the resurrection of Christ, is but one of the many glaring inconsistencies of error. The Council of Nice, a Catholic body of over 1500 delegates, called together by the Roman emperor Constantine in the year 325, decreed that Easter should always be observed on the first Sunday following the full moon happening upon or next: after the 21st of March.

Thus Easter must fall not earlier than March 22nd and not later than April 25th. The Catholics instituted this glaring error, and the Protestant daughters, of the "scarlet woman" have helped her to perpetuate it. How can any one be so deluded as to believe that a day which; moves about from year to year, as does Easter, can be the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? This latter event is as fixed and immovable in the history of the church just as certainly as his birth is fixed and immovable. The date of Jesus' birth is said to have been the 25th of December, but no human being has ever been able to prove that even this date is correct. The word "Easter" itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon, and is taken from the name of the old Saxon goddess Ostara, or Eastre, who represented the morning, or east, and the opening year, or spring. This pagan deity flourished in the imaginations of men about the same time that the Council of Nice bound its dictum upon their intellects. Thus, summing up the whole matter, what do we find? That Easter, as currently observed, is a mass of Judaism, Catholicism, paganism, of falsehood and superstition, with not a vestige of real true gospel virtue in it anywhere. For the gospel church of our Lord Jesus Christ to set apart days, or weeks, or months, or years, to commemorate anything which the Head of the church has not definitely enjoined, is to follow after men and their traditions; it is to become entangled again with the yoke of bondage, which never could justify the ungodly. The truth of God as in Christ Jesus is in its very nature eternal and spiritual, and cannot be limited to this or that duration of time. Read Paul's letter to the Galatians. "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This miracle

of the new birth wrought in the experience of the children of God, and not the 25th of December, is the living memorial of the birth of Christ, written by the finger of God. In Ephesians, first chapter, we read, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know * * * what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.” Belief in Christ is effected by the experimental operation of the same mighty power that brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead. This miracle, and not Easter, is the Spirit’s commemoration of the resurrection of the great Shepherd of the sheep, and of his victory over death, hell and the grave. “Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?” Amen. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 16
August 15, 1914

ECCLESIASTES XI. 1.

“CAST thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”

This Scripture is often quoted by the world to urge the giving of money for so-called charitable purposes, the giving of money to the missionary cause in order to facilitate the conversion of the heathen to christianity, and the giving of money for other kindred purposes. We feel that all such constructions placed upon the text are very wide of the truth and a violation of the Scripture. We have been told by Mr. Gadsby, and others who have traveled in Palestine, the land of Canaan, that there are rivers in that country that flow only

through the rainy season, and that dry up during the dry season, that these rivers become a flood at certain seasons of the year and well-nigh disappear at other times. Upon these over-flows the fertility of the soil adjacent to the rivers depends. Were it not for these high waters, we are told, the land in those neighborhoods would be barren and desert. Travelers there have further brought home to us the information that the farmers sow their seed as the waters recede or diminish, thus often casting their seed literally into the waters, losing it apparently as it sinks beneath the stream, to see it no more until it comes back to them many days afterward at the harvest, when it returns to the husband-man many fold. From our own direct observation we cannot vouch for the correctness of the above information, but it appears to us likely that it is true. If so, then it beautifully illustrates the meaning of our text. As the husbandman would go forth to sow his seed upon the waters as they recede from the land, leaving behind them a rich alluvial deposit, so Christ sends forth the preachers of his gospel to cast their bread upon the waters of affliction, or upon the waters of adversity, or upon the waters of any woe or sorrow that may come within the line of their ministry. Isaiah says, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters," and this applies, we believe, to the preachers of the gospel who are called and sent forth by the Spirit of God to declare his word and to comfort his people. These go forth to sow the seed beside all waters. In the journeyings to and fro of the ministry they come in contact with all sorts and conditions of men, they meet among the flock of God all sorts of afflictions, and an infinite variety of trials, sorrows, difficulties and burdens. They preach the gospel to all. In the congregations to whom they preach there may be, and often is, a variety of individuals, all believing in the same glorious truth of God as it is in Jesus, yet no two exactly alike, each one having his or her own life to live, and his or her own

temptations and afflictions to endure. But no matter how varied the experience of the Lord's people, the same gospel preached by the power of God reaches down into all their hearts, so that the seed is sown beside all waters, and the preacher, or sower, who is sent forth to sow the word, is not able to see what becomes of his message, often feels discouraged, and tempted to think his ministry is of no profit to the Lord's people, often seriously questions whether he himself really adequately knows anything of the truth he is laboring to set forth. But no real gospel sermon is ever preached in vain; some one gets it, if only one person, and if even one of the Lord's little ones has been fed the ministry has not been in vain. It may be days, and even months and years, before the pastor of a church can see any fruit of his labors. Sometimes a pastor dies, and is removed thus by death from the care of churches, and another man is sent of the Lord there to reap what the other had sown. In any case, preaching breath is never spent in vain. Whether the preacher ever or never sees any good come of his ministry the Lord sees it and knows it, and the labor is not in vain unto him. We have known and heard of churches declining in membership so as to appear as though they were becoming extinct, and then to take on new lease of life, new zeal and new spiritual energy, because of the fruitfulness of the ministry of some servant of God sent among them to declare God's word, and to sow the seed beside all the waters that might be inundating the souls of the flock in that particular place. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 7
April 1, 1919

ENTERTAINING STRANGERS.

SISTER M. A. Winner, of Ashville, Ohio, asks for views on Hebrews xiii. 2, desiring to know who are these strangers and angels, and how should they be entertained. This Scripture reads as follows: “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” The letter to the Hebrews was not intended for the Jews as a nation, but for those Jews who had, by the grace of God, been brought unto the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. The gospel was first preached to the Jews. Those who heard it on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts ii., were all Jews. We have no reason to think there was a single Gentile in the audience of Peter on that day. It was ordained that the gospel should be preached in all the world for a witness, beginning at Jerusalem. This was done; Many of the Jews who heard the gospel preached on the day of Pentecost believed it with all their heart, and were given understanding that Judaism had come to an end through the fulfillment by Christ of the whole purpose of the law. However there was the danger ever present of Jewish professed believers lapsing back into Judaism, and some came to hold a strange mingling of Judaism and christianity, as is shown in Acts xxi. 18-24. Thus the purpose of the letter to the Hebrews seems to be twofold: to confirm gracious Jews in their gospel position in the liberty where, with Christ had made them free, and to warn against legal entanglements and ensnaring Judaism. The one word throughout the epistle which might be said to furnish a key to it all, is “better;” contrasting the things of the law with the “better” things of Christ, setting forth him who is “better” than angels, the “better” covenant, “better” priesthood, “better” sacrifice, “better” rest, and so on. The date of the letter is, without a doubt, previous to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem and the ceasing of the Jewish

nationality. This is evident from the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter of the letter itself. Thus, being written before the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world by the Romans, the Gentiles still stood to them as “strangers,” though this strangerhood had in reality been abolished in the cross of Christ, for he had taken down the middle wall of partition that stood between Israel and these “stranger” Gentiles during old covenant or legal times, and had by the death of his cross made of these twain one new man. Thus the command in our text is for the Jew possessing gospel standing in Christ to “be not forgetful to entertain strangers,” for some of these Gentiles might turn out to be “angels;” that is, these Jewish brethren in being courteous, gentle, kind and hospitable to the Gentile “stranger” would doubtless find from time to time that they were “unawares,” being not conscious of it, “entertaining” a brother or sister in the Lord Jesus Christ. This was most certain to be the case, for Jesus had said that the kingdom should cease from national Israel and be given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. “ It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” These are the words of Paul, showing the coming to pass of the declaration of Jesus, in Matthew xxi. 43. Thus it was not at all necessary for the Jews in grace, who are especially borne in mind by the writer of Hebrews, to any longer regard the Gentiles as dogs and heathen, as was the case when the Mosaic covenant was in full sway, but to bear in mind that in the gospel dispensation, having its dawning in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the influence of grace was among the Gentiles and likely to spring forth into fruitfulness at any moment and in the most unexpected places. To entertain these strangers meant to manifest courtesy and hospitality toward them. It did not mean to welcome them to the ordinances and privileges of the gospel

church, without being persuaded they were subjects of grace. Looking back to the patterns of gospel things in the legal rites and ceremonies of the old covenant, we find the "stranger" is often mentioned. Israel of old was commanded not to vex or oppress the "strangers" within their gates; the gleanings of the harvests and vineyards were to be left for them and for the poor, and in Deut. x. 19, it says, "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." This loving the stranger manifested itself in relieving his necessities, giving him food and raiment, and in dealing justly and fairly with him. On the other hand, no stranger except of the seed of Aaron dared offer incense before the Lord; no stranger or sojourner could eat of the holy things of the Israelites; and the stranger that presumed to come nigh the tabernacle or nigh the priest's office was put to death. The hospitality and kindness toward the stranger enjoined upon Israel of old did not allow of any meddling with the holy things, the gifts of God peculiar to those of the circumcision alone. But in Exodus xiii. 48, 49, the stranger, in case he had desire to eat of the passover with those of Israel, must, with all the males belonging to him, be circumcised. He then became one with those of the circumcision, no more a stranger, but as one at home, and possessed an inalienable right to eat of the passover. "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." Leaving now the type and coming over to the antitype in the order and practice of the new testament church, we find the apostles enjoin upon the brethren hospitality, kindness, courtesy, patience, forbearance and kindred qualities toward the strangers: those who are not professedly with the church in like faith, hope and: love. This does not for one moment mean that the church is to be slack and slovenly in keeping her house, and admit just any one and everybody to eat with her of her holy things or partake with her in the observance of her solemn ordinances and

privileges. In order to this latter welcoming, there must be per fect accord of heart and soul, unity of calling, hope, faith and baptism. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” But when a stranger gives evidence that he has been born again, that he has been made to realize his sinful condition, that he has been given a good hope through grace; in other words, when it is made to appear that he has been circumcised of the Spirit in the heart, instead of outwardly in the flesh, then he is no longer to be treated as a stranger and held at arm’s length, because his alienation from the spiritual commonwealth of regenerate Israel is obliterated in his being a new creature in Christ Jesus; it becomes his privilege to come in and sup with the Numerous instances of this kind are found throughout the Book, but we will notice but one more. The two disciples that walked to Emmaus after the death of Jesus were sad of heart, beset with unbelief and fear. A stranger joined them and journeyed with them, but their eyes were holden that they could not recognize him. He began at Moses and all the prophets and opened unto them the Scriptures. When they reached their journey’s end, as night drew on, the two besought the stranger to enter and tarry with them. He did so, and as he sat at meat with them and broke the bread they knew him and instantly he was gone. They had entertained the “angel” of the new covenant “unawares.” Jesus said to those on his right hand, “I was a stranger, and ye took me in.” Those whom he addressed were not aware they had ever done so. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” When Jesus manifests himself for the first time in the heart's experience of a sinner, the sinner

does not know what ails him. He has strange thoughts, strange feelings, strange longings: he is entertaining an "angel," the true character of whom he is to later understand. We were ourselves once strangers in the land of Egypt, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. It behooves the people of God, therefore, to be kind to strangers. Our own soul's experience dictates this entertainment. The grace of God which has appeared to all men, bringing salvation, teaches these principles of right living by engraving them in the heart and imprinting them in the mind, writing them in the inward parts. Love is the foundation of it all, "the fountain whence all true obedience flows." "Let. brotherly love continue." L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 16
August 15, 1914

FREEWILL

MAN is often spoken of as being a "free moral agent," but Adam was not so, even in the garden before he sinned, though an old English writer speaks of Adam's first estate as being "happiness in his power left free to will, left to his own free will, his will though free yet mutable." Now, was Adam's will free? Remember that freedom of the will carries with it the idea that the will is free of all contingencies and can act independently of everything outside its own self. It is evident that Adam could do nothing but what God knew he would do, and knew it before Adam did it. Otherwise God could not be omniscient; that is, knowing all things. We dare not say this, even if we wanted to, for inspiration says, "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." – Acts xv.

18. Is not Adam one of God's works? If so, God knew him, all about him, from the beginning of the world. It was therefore certain in God's mind what would be Adam's conduct in the garden. If this was a certainty with God, it could not be an uncertainty with Adam; Adam could not have done otherwise than he did. Yet that does not mean, nor even imply, that Adam's will was directly coerced by the Almighty in order to compel him to sin. He needed no coercion, for the act that he did was just what he pleased to do, but because he pleased to do it does not prove that his will was free. In being pleased to sin he was guided by his own tastes and inclinations, as well as his environment (the nearness of Satan), and to the extent that he was thus influenced by principles inherent in his nature, and by the subtlety of the beguiling serpent, his will most certainly was not free. If Adam's will, then, was not free before the fall, most assuredly it never has been since in any or all of his thousands and millions of offspring. If Milton had said Adam was left to his own will, he would not have been far wrong, but when he put the word "free" in before "will" he sidestepped the truth entirely. Possibly the prevalent idea of what most men think man to be can be best expressed in the words of Channing: "He is a free being created to act from a spring in his own breast, to form himself and to decide his own destiny." This gives in condensed form from the pen of a learned man what Arminians as a rule think man to be. We must confess it is flattering to the dignity of man to suppose him to be the arbiter of his own destiny, much more so than to adhere to the old-fashioned Bible statement that man at his best state is altogether vanity, with heart deceitful and desperately wicked. Yet, for ourself, the die has been cast, and we cannot believe other than as the pen of inspiration has recorded it in Scripture. In the providence and plan of God human beings are wonderfully constructed. It almost passes possibility to enumerate all that really does go into

the making of a man. Conception, birth, training, education, environment, all and each bring their share into the construction of every person that comes into the world, and the will of each individual is bounded and determined by all these factors that go into the making. Speaking naturally, what one wills to do is in any case determined by his heritage from his ancestry, by the system of upbringing to which he is subjected, by the surroundings and circumstances in the midst of which he is placed. How then can the will be free? There are plenty of men, and learned ones, too, who ridicule and deny the truth that man's will is circumscribed, but though they deny it, they cannot and do not prove it false. It is often said that man has the power to influence his environment, to change his surroundings to accord more with his own ideas. To a certain extent this may be, and is, doubtless, true, but the very dislike of his surroundings causes him to set about rearranging or changing them, so that the action of the environment upon the man causes his reaction against or upon that environment. Action is always equal to reaction, and in the contrary direction. All the progress that man has made in the world is largely the record of his reaction to his environment, and the manner in which this reaction spends itself is largely determined from the temperament, mental and physical, inherited from his ancestors, as well as from the training and education given him after his arrival in the world. These two factors, parentage and education, determine greatly our ideals according to which we will desire to mould our environment. How, in all this, is the will free? If, then, in the sphere of natural things it be proven that man's will is not free, how much less, far less, is man's will free in reference to spiritual things. We are told that an apple falling from the tree falls to the earth in obedience to the law of gravitation, according to which all objects are attracted towards the center of the earth. Thus, though we live on a round ball, and sometimes

are walking with our heads hanging down, yet we do not fall off, because this law of gravitation guarantees our sticking fast to mother earth. As the law of gravitation, then, governs the physical world, so the law of sin and the end thereof, death, govern man mentally and morally. Thus, all of man's thoughts and imaginations, his religions and moralities, are of the earth, earthy, and tend downward to the dust in conformity with the law of sin that governs his natural being. Not one good thought can man ever have, not one right conception of himself or of God, until a stronger principle than the law of sin gets hold of him. This stronger principle is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." – Romans viii. 2. It is an awful thing to think and to teach that our destiny is in our own hands, and that we are free to choose either heaven or hell as our portion. Think what a fearful responsibility this places upon each of us. What a blessing to be made to know that not a word of such doctrine is true. How comforting to know that the mighty God settled and sealed our end before the beginning began. How comforting to know that what God has settled and sealed cannot be changed. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." The very expression, "free moral agent," is self-contradictory, for an agent is one who acts for another, and is guided by the wishes and will of his superior. No agent, then, can be free. The very term is ambiguous. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 2.
January 15, 1916

GENERATIONS

A READER of the SIGNS, living in Connecticut, has asked us to give our views on the meaning of the word "generation" in six passages of Scripture, each of which she cites. The first is Luke xxi. 32: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." In the verses preceding this expression of the Savior he had been foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the signs and events that should accompany that destruction. Some of our excellent brethren have referred these declarations of Jesus to the end of the gospel dispensation; that is, to the end of this material world, and to the winding up of the events of time at the conclusion of all worldly things. These brethren understand the word "generation" to mean, not a generation of men, but the generation, or offspring, of Jesus Christ, that the word means the people of God, and that they are not to pass away until all these things told by Jesus in the twenty-first chapter of Luke should come to pass. However, carefully as we consider this view of the word "generation" as it is used in Luke xxi., and greatly as we esteem the brethren who thus view it, we do not agree with it ourself. We understand the incidents portrayed by the Savior in this instance to refer only to the coming to an end of the legal dispensation, to the end of Jewish nationality and to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, which embodied all the rites and ceremonies of Jewish worship, We do not understand that any of these things are yet in the future before us now, still to be fulfilled, therefore the word "generation," as used in this instance, does not mean the offspring, or children, of Jesus Christ, but it means that the generation of men living when Jesus spoke those words were not to pass away until they should see all those things come to pass. In other words, that these calamities should befall the Jews within the lifetime of some

of those then living. In Matthew xvi. 21-27, Jesus foretells his death and resurrection and that which was to follow, though not as much in detail as in Luke. However, in Matthew he says, “There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” There can be no doubt but that Jesus meant that some of those very ones to whom he was then talking should not die until the fulfillment of those things. The same thing occurs in Mark ix. 1, where Jesus assured those then living that the kingdom of God was to come with power before they should taste of death. If the setting up of the gospel kingdom, as recorded in the early part of the Acts, is not the coming of God’s kingdom with power, then we are at a loss to know what the coming of the kingdom with power does mean. Taking all these Scriptures together and comparing them, we must aver that the word “generation,” as used in Luke xxi. 32, means a generation as reckoned among men, and does not mean the offspring or children of God.

The second Scripture is Psalms xiv. 5: “There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.” This means that God is in the offspring, or children, of Jesus Christ. That One born of the virgin, and who himself was the only begotten Son of God, is the righteous. No sinner ever is righteous in God’s sight except as the righteousness of Jesus is imputed unto the sinner. So, Jesus being that righteous One of God in whom all the elect are made righteous, it follows that the “generation of the righteous” must mean, and can only mean, the elect of God in Christ Jesus who became actually his in generation, or in being quickened by his Spirit into divine life and born in due time according to his will, and not the will of men. God is in them. He makes his tabernacle in his people. Their bodies are the temple of the living God.

The third Scripture cited by our inquirer is Psalms xxii. 30: “A seed shall serve him; it shall he accounted to the Lord for a generation.” This seed that shall serve him is the seed, not of David, Jesse’s son, but the seed of the spiritual David, our Lord Jesus Christ. Those born, or begotten, of Him are all one generation, though they may be scattered over long ages of time, and live in and among successive generations of men. All the Lord’s people are his generation, one generation, not many generations. Thus, the Lord counts them, or reckons them, as being one generation, no matter whether his people lived ages ago, are living in the world now, or whether they shall live here many years hence. The fourth text is Psalms xxiv. 6: “This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.” Previous to these words in the twenty-fourth Psalm, the question is asked, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?” The answer is: “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” Immediately we see this cuts us all off from ever standing in God’s holy place if we expect to come there through any works or merit of our own, for there is not a member of all the race of Adam in all the history of the world whose hands have been wholly clean, or whose heart has been pure; not one but who has at some time or other lifted up his soul unto vanity, or who has sworn deceitfully. This forever excludes human nature from ascending the hill of the Lord. The only cleanness, purity and sincerity in which a sinner shall ever ascend unto the Lord must be the perfect excellence of Jesus, which God gave to his people in his covenant of election before time began. Therefore the word “generation” as used in this Psalm, since it is in the singular and not in the plural, must mean one generation. It is the generation of Jesus Christ running through all ages of time, and composed of those who seek the Lord.

The next Scripture offered by our reader for our consideration is Isaiah liii. 8: “Who shall declare his generation?” As the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah wonderfully foretells the sufferings and humiliation of Jesus, this verse asks, Who is able to tell the generation? that is, Who is able to tell who are the people of the living God? His offspring are those born pf the Spirit, hence a spiritual heritage not discernible by men. The Lord knows his people, who they are and where they are, but who among men is there that can number them? Men can write the genealogies of their fellows, can tell who their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren are; but here is Jesus, who was cut off out of the land of the living, who was taken from prison and from judgment; therefore who is there that is able to tell his generation, since it is a spiritual lineage, and not one of flesh and blood?

The last text is 1 Peter ii. 9: “Ye are a chosen generation.” This, too, means the children of God, who were chosen in Christ before the world began, afterward to be generated or made manifest here in the world in their being translated from darkness into His marvelous light. New we have answered these questions the best we could, conscious all the time that there are those among our brethren who know vastly more about these things than we do, and who are far better able to write more clearly, but we have given the best that is in us. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 9
May 1, 1919

GENESIS IX. 27.

"GOD shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem."

The will of God concerning the world and its people is revealed in the events that occur from day to day in its history. History is a record of past events. Prophecy, however, dares more than history, and looks into the unrevealed future, declaring' what is yet to be brought forth from the womb of time. Noah's words quoted above are prophecy, and are an instance of God's method of communicating with the fathers of old by the prophets, and not by his Son, as now. (See Hebrews i. 1, 2.) This one bit of prophecy is fraught with deep significance; it contains the key to much of the world's history, but much more, it contains the secret to the history of the visibility of the church of Christ. I hope we may be able to obtain a glimpse of both meanings of the text. Noah does not deserve any credit for unusual sagacity and foresight, for his saying is the fruit of faith. Noah did not understand what he was talking about any more than the people of the Lord in this day understand fully their own thoughts and emotions when under the exercise of this same faith. Noah was warned of God of things not seen as yet, and moved by fear builded an ark to the saving of his house. How was Noah warned of God? By faith, that mighty principle which has moved the people of God aright in all ages of the world. Faith is the magnetic needle of the soul's compass which points always to the same star – the Star of Bethlehem, and will not let us go wrong. Noah could not warn others of the coming disaster, because none had this faith, and the things of God are revealed "from faith to faith," and not from faith to *no* faith, assertions to the contrary notwithstanding. The lessons taught in all these faithful sayings of old, instead of

being wasted upon the world of that day, were reserved for us unto whom the better things of the gospel are come.

Certain circumstances surrounded the utterance of this prophecy quoted at the beginning. Noah was drunk with wine, and lay naked in his disgrace. His son Ham discovered him in this condition and exposed it to the two other sons, Shem and Japheth, who, instead of gloating over the incident, spread a garment over their father with their faces turned away. Upon awaking, Noah, aware of Hani's treachery and of the faithfulness of Shem and Japheth, cursed the offspring of the one but blessed the others. The blessings are promises unto us. So is God's will made known. He makes use of wicked things and base to further his purpose concerning his elect. Who dare question, the predestination of God in these things, or who, acknowledging his predestination, dare lay the charge of guilt before his throne? These circumstances which accompanied the utterance of this truth by the lips of Noah furnished an unworthy setting for so precious a stone. Truth is a gem often found in the most unlikely places, and in settings unworthy of it, yet devoid of its habitation its brilliancy would not appear so wonderful nor its rarity be appreciated.

Shem was the forefather of Terah, the father of Abram, whose name was afterward changed to Abraham, who was the father of Isaac, the father Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, from whom sprang that nation of old so singularly favored of the Lord above all nations of the earth. Japheth had seven sons, whose posterity divided the "isles of the Gentiles," every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations. From Noah sprang both Jew and Gentile. Japheth, the father of the Gentiles, was to be enlarged by the Lord, and should come to "dwell in the tents of Shem," meaning that his posterity should so increase in power and influence as to gain the ascendancy over the sons of Shem,

and dwell in their dwelling-places. For many centuries the Jews were the ruling power in Jerusalem and the "land of Canaan," but finally passed under the government of Rome, and were gradually borne down under the yoke until their national identity became lost, about 70 A. D., when the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army and many of the Jews were put to the sword, resulting in the massacre and banishment of hundreds of thousands of the unhappy people who were scattered among their brethren in all parts of the, world. Josephus estimates the total number slain to have been no less than 1,356,460. This is the *historical* fulfillment of Noah's prophecy concerning Japheth. This is also the "abomination that maketh desolate," spoken of in Daniel xii. 11. It is also the fulfillment of the prophecy in Hosea i. 4: "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel." Jezreel, meaning "God's seed," prefigures Christ the only begotten Son of God. Historically speaking, the widespread desolation that came upon the Jewish nation in the year 70 was the awful vengeance of God upon that people for the crucifixion of Christ.

Now, with the help of God's Spirit to give us understanding, let us turn from the external to the internal or spiritual meaning of the text. Note the language, "tents of Shem," not land of Shem. Quite a decided difference. Not only was the seed of Japheth to possess the land of Shem, but the home of the Israelite was to be the home of the Gentile; he was to have the same roof for a covering, and be protected by the same wall. Israel dwelt beneath the wings of the Almighty. God was his covering and his wall of salvation. He was eyes unto Israel and a strong arm. Who was it that for Israel's sake caused the lied Sea to become a way of escape from the bondage of Egypt? Who was it satisfied their thirst with water from the smitten rock, and who sent manna from heaven in time of great hunger? Even the Lord God

Omnipotent did all this, and more, for his mercies unto that rebellious people are beyond recounting. This same God gave Shem by the mouth of his prophets many sweet and precious promises whose fulfillment was treasured in the Savior to be revealed. But the Israelites blundered, they based their right to the promises upon endless genealogies, establishing their lineal descent from Abraham. That they were altogether wrong in so doing is clear from the words of John the Baptist to them, as recorded in Matthew iii. 6: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." We have also the direct words of Christ concerning this matter in his address to the Jews, as recorded in John x. 26: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Now, as to who are the heirs of the promise, ask the great apostle to the Gentiles and he will tell you: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Since we are Gentiles, my brethren, we have great reason to thank God that our right to the promise does not depend upon our being able to trace our descent from Abraham, for we could never do that, being descended from Japheth, and not from Shem. The whole thing depends upon the election of God in Christ before the foundation of the world. If we are included in that election, then are we heirs; if we are not so elected, then all the genealogies in the world will not make us heirs. Christ did not permit his disciples to bear this news unto the Gentiles until after his death, but sent them only unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. After his resurrection, however, he sent them on the great apostolic mission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "All the world," meaning Gentiles as well as Jews. By the way, permit me to say that this mission was finished prior to 63 A. D., when Paul, while a prisoner in Rome, wrote his letter to the brethren at Colosse, in which he said that the word of the

truth of the gospel had come unto them as it had "in all the world." So now it is clear that God no longer gives unto the Jew his peculiar care and providence, but has brought the Gentile to trust in him also. Thus Japheth dwells in the tents of Shem. The election of God in Christ includes both Jew and Gentile, all whom the Holy Ghost has circumcised in heart, for the circumcision of the flesh avails nothing.

"God shall enlarge Japheth." "Enlarge," according to the marginal reading, means to persuade or convince. This convincing is the work of the Spirit in the heart of the sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, and brings him to dwell beneath the love and mercy of an all-wise God, to know his gracious providence disposes each event, and to trust in that everlasting arm which is able to save unto the uttermost, thanking his heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord that he has redeemed his soul from destruction and keeps his feet from falling.

HORACE H. LEFFERTS
Philadelphia, Pa., August 10, 1904

Signs Of The Times
Volume 72. , No. 18.
SEPTEMBER 15, 1904.

HABAKKUK III. 7.

"I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble."

The language of this prophet is poetry indeed. He sings in this third chapter of the manifestation of the glory of God: "God came from Teman, and the holy One from Mt. Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise." The magnificent splendor of God's glory as revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ is here the

poet's theme, nor does he change his subject when declaring the words of our text, but affirms there shall be affliction and trembling at the glorious coming of the Lord. Isaiah says, when foretelling the incarnation: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Habakkuk's view of the glorious appearance of God in the salvation of his elect tells the same thing, but in a different manner. He is not looking at that side of Christ's character which shows him to have been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but is viewing him as the first begotten from the dead, the victorious warrior, the glory-crowned victor over the enemies of the church. We will prove this. "Tents of Cushan." This is highly figurative. The word "tents" is used, signifying those that dwell therein. Cushan refers to Chushanrishathaim, (see Judges iii. 8.) Cushan is used by the poet in place of the entire word, to preserve the meter. This is perfectly allowable in poetry, in fact must be resorted to at times in poetical composition, so as not to destroy the melodious rhythm. How many, many times rebellious Israel turned from the Lord! How many, many times did God deliver her from her enemies, yet she would slip back again. In Judges, third chapter, we find recorded one of these instances. We read here that Israel did not keep herself separate from the heathen, as she was commanded, but married the daughters of the idolatrous nations, and even gave her own daughters in marriage to them. Therefore God's wrath was kindled against Israel, so that he delivered them into the hands of King Chushanrishathaim, whom they served eight years. But when at last they became sorely oppressed, Israel cried unto the Lord, and he raised up Othniel, whose name signifies the lion of God, to be her deliverer. Othniel girded with power from God *to* deliver the oppressed, proves too much for Chushaurishathairu, and the heathen king with his followers is in turn put under affliction. Othniel is a shadow of the Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, who gained the victory

over all the enemies of the saints. “I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction,” breathes in every word the victory of our Lord over death, hell and sin, and says unto Jerusalem her warfare is accomplished, her enemies terror-stricken before the resurrection of Christ.

“The curtains of the land of Midian.” By the word “curtains” is meant the tent-hangings. Once again a figure of speech comes into play, for the prophet uses the dwelling to represent those that dwell therein. “The land of Midian.” The Midianites were the descendants of Midian; they dwelt in the region stretching from what is now known as the Persian Gulf, to the plains of Moab, but the more civilized dwelt in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai, and carried on a trade with Egypt. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was a Midianitish priest. They were heathens worshiping the false god, Baal-peor; they were therefore enemies of Israel. Soon after their deliverance from Chushanrishathaim, the Israelites slipped back into their old idolatrous rut; they blasphemed the true God and served Baal and the groves. This time God used the Midianite as a rod of correction. Every year for seven long years, just at the time of harvest wandering bands of Midianites would swoop down upon the valleys waving with ripened grain, and would encamp there until every single grain was gathered; they then passed on, leaving desolation behind them. You may imagine the condition of Israel after seven years of this experience. They must have been reduced to poverty and humiliation. However, at the end of the seven years God raised up Gideon their deliverer. Gideon, like every other one whom God has called to serve him, felt very keenly the lack of necessary qualification on his part for a leader; but God had called him, he must obey. Without repeating in detail this very interesting recital, we will glance at but a few things necessary to a right understanding of our text. Because Gideon felt to be so insufficient for the work set before him, he asked God

repeatedly to give him a sign whereby he might be assured of his calling. One of these evidences is worthy our attention. The night before the battle Gideon went near unto the encampment of the enemy, and heard a conversation between two of the soldiers. One was telling the other a dream; he had dreamed a cake of barley bread had fallen into their ranks, causing great havoc and confusion. His fellow-soldier immediately interpreted the dream to mean that the God of Israel was about to deliver the hosts of Midian into the hand of Gideon. This rumor spread throughout the camp, and created great terror among their ranks. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. By such a simple thing as a dream, and that, too, of a cake of barley bread, the hosts of Midian were already seized with fear and trembling, even before Gideon with his army appeared. Gideon with his three hundred men divided into three companies repair to the battle. Their weapons are not the sword and spear; no, but they carry in one hand a pitcher, in which is a light, and in the other hand a trumpet. Gideon is at the head; he says unto each of his three companies, "Look on me, and do likewise." So Jesus is at the head of the three great dispensations: the patriarchal, the legal and the gospel. They nil look unto him, testifying of him alone. With this seemingly weak equipment they surround the camp of the Midianites. At the right moment, following Gideon's example, they break their pitchers, holding their lamps on high and shouting with their trumpets, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." The enemy flees before that sound, and fades away before that glorious light exalted by Gideon and his little army. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The pitcher of Gideon is the earthen vessel of the humanity of Christ. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." The light in the pitcher is the treasure in the earthen vessel, which is "the

light of the knowledge of the glory of God," which fills the earth as the waters cover the sea. By the breaking of the pitchers and the exaltation of the light within, the Midianites were vanquished. So by the ending of the natural life of Christ upon the cross – the breaking of the earthen vessel – his light is unconfined, it is exalted, shining forth unto the Gentiles, unto every nation under heaven, and into the heart of every creature of his grace, putting to flight the enemy of darkness, the evils of our own nature. Thus Habakkuk saw the curtains of Midian trembling. This is but expressing the victory of Christ over all the enemies of the church, and the establishment of his prosperous and glorious reign as the King of saints.

It is only through the breaking of our own bodies, the, destroying of all confidence in ourselves, that the light of Christ is manifested in us.

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.
Philadelphia, Pa., May 30, 1904.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 72, No. 13.

HEBREWS II. 8.

"BUT now we see not yet all things put under him."

The inspired writer to the Hebrews declares that all things are already put under the feet of Jesus Christ. While he states this wonderful triumph of righteousness to be a truth accomplished and finished, still to those of us who are yet in the flesh living here on earth in this state "we see not yet all things put under him." By Jesus' resurrection from the dead he is declared to be the Son of God with power. He himself told his disciples after his resurrection, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Therefore Jesus is now

exalted at the right hand of God, having awakened from the dead and ascended up on high in the image of the invisible God, the very equal of the Father in power, that is, in omnipotence; indeed, he is the very God himself, for they are the three in One and cannot be conceived as separate. God has put all things in subjection under the feet of his Son. The word does not declare that God is yet to do this, but that he has already done it. We love to think of the salvation of the Lord's people as being a finished, perfect and complete salvation: nothing yet to be added to it, nor yet can anything be subtracted from it. All that remains is for the Holy Spirit in these last days to take of the things of Jesus and show them unto the heirs of glory until they all come, each man in his own order as God has arranged, to the perfect man – the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. In considering the things that are already put under the feet of the victorious Christ we first think of the law. God placed the first man in the garden and put him under law. Had God not given Adam the law, then nothing that Adam might have done could have been sin, for sin is never imputed where there is no law. As sin is a transgression of the law, thus where there is no law there can be no sin, for there can be no transgression in the absence of law. This is one point in which God can never be the author of sin, because he is under no law, cannot transgress law, so that whatever he does is right and just. God created the wicked for the day of evil, so he declares, yet in doing so he committed no sin, for he transgressed no law. No higher being than himself exists to whom God could be held amenable. God could, as he says, make peace and create evil, and is perfectly justified in doing so, since he breaks no law in doing so, therefore commits no sin. But with Adam and with Adam's posterity it is infinitely different. God placed all under law. This law Adam and all who followed him transgressed; not only transgressed it in Adam, but have transgressed it actually each one

themselves. Now, as the elect of God, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, were all involved in Adam's transgression, therefore were all held under the captivity and dominion of the law, there was no possible way by which the elect of God could be released from under the law except the law be fulfilled in very minute particular, in every jot and tittle. As fulfillment was utterly impossible in and by the elect themselves, there was nothing that could be done but for God in the person of Jesus to come down under the law and fulfill the obligations which the people owed to an outraged law. This Jesus did, and he fulfilled the law in all its demands; not one thing that all the law required was left unsatisfied when Jesus poured forth his blood upon the cross. Having then come under the law, having kept the law perfectly, having paid its demands in his own precious blood, the law then had no further claims upon him nor upon one of all his elect. Therefore he could not be held in death, and so arose from the dead, thereby coming up above the law and raising his people with him from under the curse and condemnation of the law to a state of justification before God. Thus we see that the law is put under his feet and under their feet, for the church is not any more under law, but under grace, no more subject to the law of sin and death, but subject to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Second. Sin is put under him. This must necessarily follow as the consequence of his having put the law under his feet, because the law is the strength of sin. Since, as we have said, sin is nothing more or less than the transgression of the law, then the elect of God risen in and with Christ, not now being under the dominion of the law of sin and death, cannot break that law. A citizen of Great Britain cannot break the law of the United States, since he does not live in the United States and is not therefore under its jurisdiction. So God's people have been by Christ raised from under the dominion of the former law, are not now living under it, but under

grace, which is another country, therefore they cannot sin against the former law, as it no longer has any jurisdiction over them. Thus sin is one of the many things that are put under the feet of the victorious Christ. Also, this is one of the things that we, who are yet in the flesh and in the world, do not yet see as being put under him, only as we apprehend it by faith. We see so much sin in ourselves continually, and so much sin in all flesh, that it appears to us now as we journey here below that sin is very much in evidence, and very far from being in subjection to righteousness. Really, however, from the standpoint of God, and as he sees it, the work is all done, the law has been satisfied and sin has been washed away so far as the elect are concerned. What a glorious day that will be for every one of God's children when they can see it as he sees it and know it as he knows it, and not any more simply in part and as through a glass darkly.

Third. Death is put under his feet. This is not yet to be done, but has been done, Of course we see it not yet under him, only as we glimpse it by faith. But death is the wages of sin, and sin is death's sting. When a serpent's poison, or sting, is extracted it is then as harmless as a lamb. Now, Jesus fulfilled the law. When he did that he took away sin's strength. When he took away sin by the sacrifice of himself he extracted the sting from death, or, as the Bible says, abolished death. Thus he declared himself to be the resurrection and the life, and that any living and believing in him should never die. What does this mean but that death is done away in Christ, and by him, that it is entirely put under his feet? To us who are still here in the world it seems death is in evidence all around us. Really, though, as God sees it the work is done; there is no death to the people of God since it is already put under the feet of the Conqueror, Christ.

Fourth. The devil, or Satan, is put under the feet of Jesus. The devil, or Satan, is the one that has had the power of death, the Bible says so. Jesus came down to earth and bearded the fearful lion in his den; that is, he went through death in order to destroy him that had the power of death. He slew Satan with Satan’s own weapon, even as David cut off the head of Goliath with the giant’s own sword. He did this in order to deliver his children, who through fear of death had all their lifetime been subject to bondage. Thus, we must conclude, were we able to see these things with the eyes of the Spirit from the standpoint of eternity, we would see that there' is no devil, that he is destroyed. Far be it from us to say Satan is not destroyed when the Bible says so plainly that he is destroyed. However, to us who are yet veiled in the flesh, we cannot attain unto such wonderful knowledge, and we see not yet Satan put under Him only as we are given to see little by little by faith. He seems to us to be very much alive, both in the world and in ourselves, sometimes, but this is just seeming and not really being. A thing may seem to be so and yet not really be so. These evils all seem to be very much alive in us and around us. We need only the perfect vision of the Spirit to behold that things are not what they seem, that our senses and our reason deceive us all the time, and that in reality God reigns and rules among the inhabitants of the earth no less than in the army of heaven, that his divine will and eternal purpose are being accomplished in earth and seas and in all deep places. God through the humiliation of his Son has highly exalted him from the regions of the dead and has given him a name at the which everything in heaven, in earth and under the earth, does bow. This name of the glorious and eternal Victor and Conqueror is the only name given under heaven among men whereby the elect of God must be and are saved. L.

Elder H.H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No 17
September 1, 1919

HEBREWS VI. 4-6.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

An inquirer living in Arkansas has been perturbed by this text and has asked us to give our views upon it. It is often the case that Satan takes advantage of the believer's ignorance of the meaning of Scripture in order to torment one with it. The word tells us that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (2 Cor. xi. 14.) This is one of the many guises assumed by the adversary of our souls in order to plague us with doubts as to the genuineness of our hope and of the security of our salvation. However, whenever Satan uses Scripture to worry us, he never gives the true interpretation, but always wrests it from its content and context to suit his own ends. At the start, let us be sure that the word of God is never at any time nor in any place inconsistent with itself. The Scriptures are one harmonious whole and are to be so accepted. If it is made to appear that one passage contradicts some other passage, it is because the contradiction is in our own minds. When rightly seen in the light of the Holy Spirit, the word is discovered to be in complete harmony. It is a fundamental point of Bible doctrine that those for whom Jesus died are safe for time and for eternity. Their salvation cannot be affected by anything they

do or say. Since salvation from sin and all its consequences is effectively accomplished in the sacrificial atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ entirely independent of the believer's will or efforts, therefore the believer's being effectually kept in the way of salvation to be ultimately housed in glory, is also entirely independent of the believer's will or efforts. Since salvation is wholly by grace, the free and unmerited favor of God whose divine justice has been completely satisfied in the cross of Christ, the preservation of the believer all along the way to future glory is likewise wholly of grace. Therefore, the true child of God cannot fall out of the Savior's atonement, cannot perish from the presence of the Almighty God whose eternal Son paid the precious price for that child's redemption. This is exactly what the apostle is proving in this sixth chapter of Hebrews. The writer describes those who cannot fall away as follows:

1. Those who were once enlightened.
2. Those who have tasted of the heavenly gift.
3. Those who were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.
4. Those who have tasted the good word of God.
5. Those who have tasted the powers of the world to come.

It is utterly impossible for the above described characters to fall away from the effective work of salvation accomplished for them by the Son of God. To be enlightened is to be lighted up within one's self by the revelation that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and that only by him must we come to God. To be thus illuminated is to be shown by the teaching, not of men, but of the Holy Spirit, that salvation is wholly by grace through Jesus Christ and entirely without the works of the law on our part. The light, which in the beginning shown out of darkness, shines at God's command in the sinner s heart to illuminate him, thus opening the eyes of his understanding to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, whom to know is life eternal to the

one thus illuminated. It is to know by revelation, as did Simon Peter, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Can such an one ever fall away, and perish from that salvation? It is plain to be seen that such falling away is impossible. If such a thing could be, it would require a fresh crucifixion of Christ to renew that one again to repentance: and if the first crucifixion was not effective to secure such a character from falling away, would there be any assurance that a second crucifixion would be any more effective? To say that such an one could fall away would be to put Christ to an open shame. Why? Because, if such could fall away after having been saved by Christ, would it not be an admission that his shed blood was spilt in vain? Therefore; to even think of such a thing, much less to say such a thing, as that one once illuminated or enlightened to know the truth can fall away, is to blaspheme the holy Son of God. Those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift." Believing is eating. Hence, tasting is believing. Peter tells us that if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, let us desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. (1 Peter ii. 2, 3.) Tasting that the Lord is gracious comes by way of our believing that his grace saves us, and believing comes by faith and faith is the gift of God. Where the Spirit quickens the dead sinner into life through Christ, that one believes by the operation of faith within his soul that he is saved by free and sovereign grace. Jesus Christ is God's unspeakable gift to his lost and ruined children in Adam. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". - John iii. 16. Can it be possible, then, for these who have tasted of God's heavenly gift of his Son to them, to ever fall away? No. If such could be, it would mean that Christ would have to die again, thus confessing his first work not to have been efficacious, thus putting him to the open shame of having failed in what he came to do.

Those who “were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.” After the close of the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and after his ascension into heaven the Holy Ghost was sent upon the believing church in such a way that they were baptized in the Holy Ghost. The Spirit was in them and they were in the Spirit, completely immersed in this third Person of the Trinity and completely filled and indwelt by this Holy Person. From the day that this Holy Ghost came from heaven to dwell in the people of God in this grace age and until this day in which we are now living, each and every true believer, as well as the whole invisible church collectively, has been dwelt in by the Holy Ghost so that all who constitute the true body of the Lord Jesus Christ are partakers of the Holy Ghost. Can any such fall away from this security? If such could be the case, there is no such thing as salvation or security anywhere in the universe. Even to think such a thing makes a true believer blush for shame to think of the scandal that would be upon the cross of Christ could he have failed in his perfect work.

Those who “have tasted the good word of God.” The word of God is the Scriptures. The believer finds nourishment for his soul in the word of God, the word of God becomes his food. Such an one cannot live by mere earthly bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. The Scriptures are the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and for the thorough furnishing of the child of God unto every good work. The Scriptures through faith make one wise unto salvation. They are for the believer's teaching, for his correction, for his reproof and for his instruction in the way of righteousness. Hence, if one is taught doctrine through the Scriptures, if one is corrected or reproved or instructed by them in a saving and in a living way, then such an one must be a child of God or the Scriptures would not have that salutary effect in his life. To have the Holy Spirit take the biblical record of Jesus and open it out unto our

understanding is to taste the good word of God. Can it be thought for one moment that such can fall away from the saving power of God that holds them and be lost from it? No. Again, we repeat that if such could fall away, nothing short of a repetition of Christ's work could save them. Such cannot be, because by the one offering of himself; Jesus has forever perfected them that are sanctified. (Heb. x. 14.) Hence, the impossibility of their ever falling away. There is a world of difference between falling on the deck of a ship and falling off the deck of a ship. If one falls off the deck of a ship, he is drowned;, if one falls on the deck of a ship, he may hurt himself, but he cannot be lost from the ship. Just so, in the believer's life and walk there are many stumblings, but he always falls **ON** the Rock that saves him, never does he fall **OFF** it.

Those who have tasted the powers of the world to come. There is another world coming other that this one we are now in. We are looking for it, longing for it and are hastening on to it: a new creation, a new earth and a new heavens in which shall dwell righteousness forever. Those who are by God ordained unto this glorious new world of glory already have tasted of the powers of it in their soul's experience here. Believers have received the earnest, or foretaste, of that coming world. Peter, James and John in the mount with Jesus saw Christ transfigured before them, saw Moses and Elias appear with him, heard the voice of God acclaim Jesus his only Son whom they were to hear. Thus did these three disciples taste in the transfiguration scene the powers of the world that is coming at some future time when the redeemed shall be gathered from the dead and into it. What a glorious prospect is before them who fear and reverence God Almighty through his Son and by the Holy Spirit! These have a good hope through grace: hope that is both desire and expectation, kindled within them as an earnest, a God-given pledge, of that which shall be fully and forever theirs some

day. As surely as God has implanted in our hearts the foretaste of that, better world, so surely he will not disappoint the hope which he has wrought. God cannot deny himself, he cannot go back on his own work. It is he and no one else, who has begun the good work in his people and he will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ, unto that day when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven in person to take his ransomed people home. Can it be thought for one moment that these can fall away, these who have already tasted in their soul's present experience of grace, the powers of the world to come? No, never. Such are kept by the power of God unto the decisive hour when his judgments shall be made known in bringing forth truth unto victory, when it shall be sung by all the angels and by all the redeemed: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

The writer in Hebrews, sixth chapter, instead of teaching that those once saved are in danger of falling away, is proclaiming just the opposite, the utter impossibility of their, falling away; because if they could fall away, it would necessitate Christ's dying again and would be an open or public confession that his first work was a failure. There is no failure in him. He is declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. Nothing can pluck us out of his hands. Doubtless, he went forth weeping, bearing precious seed, in the time of his incarnation in the flesh, but he will without fail come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Have we not already had a taste of the glorious and wonderful power that is to characterize the world yet to come? Does not the taste make us yearn longingly for the fullness? "If such the sweetness of the streams, what must the fountain be?"

We hope that if our inquirer who asked us to write upon this subject has had any doubts about the safety and security of God's elect from ever falling away, that such doubts may be banished by a faithful perusal of the word of God. Christ answered the tempter by quoting the word of God, and there is no better way to vanquish the tempter when he comes against our souls than by the sword of God. Satan fears "Thus saith the Lord." May all doubting souls be blest to wield against this adversary the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 101, No. 5 - May 1933

HEBREWS X. 23-27.

IN the April SIGNS we endeavored to set forth the superiority of the life of faith over every other way of living, using the first part of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews as a basis. Since then a brother has written, requesting us to present some thoughts on the above portion of the tenth chapter of Hebrews.

Verse twenty-three reads: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." "Our faith" means the doctrine, The word "faith" in Scripture sometimes signifies the doctrine or body of truth held by believers, again it signifies the operation of the Spirit in the soul to bring about belief. "Doctrine" means not the arbitrary dogmas taught by men, but the principles of truth set forth in the Scriptures of inspiration and certified by the Holy Spirit in the experience of believers. The profession of the doctrine must be based on one's being in experimental possession of the life of the doctrine. Any profession of faith without one's being a possessor of that faith means being religious in form only. Being a possessor of faith is the fruit of' being a subject

of grace. Many professors are not in reality possessors, and therefore render only lip service to the truth. If one is through grace a possessor of the life of the doctrine his service is of the heart, his religion is a vital matter with him. Wavering means being unstable. One who wavers bends first this way, then that. He is like a reed bending in obedience to every shifting' wind that blows. If one is not experimentally convinced of the truth he professes, he will drift uncertainly, being much like a ship without a pilot, lacking steadiness. Even the best of saints are at times assailed within themselves by doubts concerning the validity of their hope and concerning the truth of the doctrine they profess. But such temptations within the soul do not constitute the wavering meant in the text unless the outward life becomes affected by the inward temptations to uncertainty. There is not one of us but who sins in our thoughts and imaginations, but usually grace restrains these inward errors from affecting the outward life. If grace did not save us in this way, there would never be one of us able to maintain a godly walk and conversation. So if the doubts and questionings which assail us so terribly at times within us, should be allowed to affect our outward life, the result would be wavering and instability. Grace saves the believer in this as in all other exigencies of the life of faith. Therefore "holding fast" proves whether one is really a possessor or merely a professor. If one is in vital, experimental possession of the truth, his internal soul doubts and fears will not lead to wavering in the outward life and walk. If one is merely a professor rendering lip service to the truth, he will soon or late waver and fall away, because he lacks experimental gracious conviction to hold him. Thus it must follow that any successful holding fast of faith on the part of believers is because grace holds them fast. Just as we love God because he first loved us, so we hold fast the faith because faith holds on to us. Otherwise the saints of God never could, of themselves, hold to the doctrine. That man

whose soul is gripped by the power of the truth will of necessity hold fast to the truth. We must not lose sight of this fundamental truth: every spiritual act on the part of believers is the effect of the Spirit. The act does not produce the Spirit, but the Spirit the act. If we choose God, it is because he first chose us. Had God not done great things for his people there would never have been any response from them to him. He says within them, "Seek ye my face." Their hearts reply, "Thy face, Lord, we will seek." If he draws us, we will run after him. Without that divine drawing there can i)e no running toward him. Saints by the power of God are kept. This keeping of them by the power of God through faith is the ability by which they hold fast the profession of their faith. The "let us" is equal to a prayer on our part that God may see fit to graciously keep us to the faith so that we may hold fast to it. Such prayer he will not ignore, because God, who has promised his people all sustaining and keeping grace, is faithful and will never go back on his word. He has pledged his sovereignty to the keeping of his elect in the way, therefore true soul-breathings to him for his power to keep us will not & in vain. Hence, let us look within ourselves and see if we have a real desire to keep the faith. If we have such desires they are prayers to which the Spirit is not deaf, petitions which he will heed, and he will bless us with grace to keep us so that we may thereby keep the faith.

Verse twenty-four reads: "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." Again, it takes love to provoke or incite love. God's people are a household who love one another because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, thus showing they have passed from death unto life. Where this love is, they will not stir up one another's jealousy, malice or anger; they will not provoke one another to wrath: they will incite each other to love and to the good works of the Spirit. Works, to be really good, must be the fruit of the Spirit. Otherwise, however fair works may seem,

if they lack the Spirit for a foundation, they are not good. Gentleness, peace, temperance, brotherly love, patience, longsuffering, faith and all such are the fruit of the Spirit, hence are good works. If these things be in us and abound, they will make us fruitful in the work of the Lord. Without them, we are barren and desolate. Love begets love. God loving us causes us to love him. When one loves the brethren, it incites them to love him. When one is a man of peace and gentleness toward the household of faith, it provokes them to show peace and gentleness toward him. On the other hand, if we criticize and find fault with our brethren, they will likely do the same to us. Whatever yardstick we use to measure others, we must not complain if they in turn use our own measure, whereby to judge us. We must conclude, therefore, that for one to be possessed of a carping, bitter, jealous tendency toward the brethren argues an absence of love in the soul of that one toward the brotherhood. With what judgment we judge, it shall be meted to us again. Hence, the proper conduct on the part of the saints of God is by love to provoke love, by peace to incite peace, by gentleness to stimulate others to be gentle. Also, it is right that brethren should be reminded to minister to the needy among them in a substantial way; so that if God has blessed some of us with a goodly share of the benefits of this world temporally, we should be encouraged to show our love and fellowship by contributing to the relief of those less fortunate among us. This, and such like, is provoking one another to good works.

Verse twenty-five reads: “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see· the day approaching.” Even in that day, as now in ours, there was a tendency on the part of some to remain away from the meetings of the church. We every one of us need all the others, no one of us can live a healthy or full spiritual life

away from the brethren. If God’s people could get along just as well alone to themselves as in the company of their fellows in Christ, He would not have brought into being the visible church and maintained its continuity through the centuries. The meetings of the church occupy a very important and God-designed place in our lives. We suffer loss apart from them. One of the worst tendencies of our people at the present time is to stay away from the meetings of the church when the pastor is not present. We contend that the church should always maintain its regular meetings, pastor or no pastor. The blessing comes in our being in the way, not out of the way. Too much stress to-day is put on the importance of the preaching gifts to the exclusion of all other gifts. The pastor is not the head of the church and the order of the house should not be thought of as depending solely upon him. He is the servant of the church, not the hub about which the church revolves. There are other and valuable gifts in the church aside from the preaching gifts. It used to be that our churches held at stated times what were called conference or prayer meetings, in which all the brethren, including the sisters, were encouraged to take part according to their several abilities. These of late years have been much neglected and some churches now meet only when the pastor is present. From my own personal experience, I can say that in the days of my youth in the church these conference meetings were blessed to my comfort and peace of mind. Might it not be also in the case of others? Might it not be that some of Zion’s little ones are starving to-day for lack of the openings which these conference meetings bring to them? Some of our present gifts that have been ordained to the ministry were first discovered in these conference meetings. Why should the pastor consume the whole time at all the meetings of the church? Should not the other gifts have the privilege to exercise as well as he? We do not mean that some brother should time after time monopolize all the

time, thus making himself obnoxious, but each and all of the membership who feel to speak in these meetings should have the privilege of doing so. ·We are commanded in the above text to "exhort one another" to this effect. If members of the church repeatedly stay away from the meetings they should be visited, not in order to berate or to scold them, but to lovingly exhort them to their privileges in the church. "And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." As the church in that day recognized from the signs of those times that the end of that former dispensation of the Jewish nationality was fast approaching, so do we to-day from the signs of our times recognize that the times of the Gentiles are drawing to a close, be it in our lifetimes or not, and that it behooves us to cherish the things really worth while and not to 1mg too closely to ourselves the things that must inevitably perish and be taken from us. The day is coming that will prove every man's work whether it be of wood, hay or stubble, or whether it be gold, silver and precious stones. Only that will stand the judgment of God which is founded on Christ and rooted within him. The assemblings of the saints are on that sure foundation. Let us, then, not forsake them. This life which we live with our brethren in Christ is the only really worth while and abiding life, after all. All other relationships end with time and are dissolved in death.

Verses twenty-six and twenty-seven read: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." There is, then, such a thing as a believer's transgressing even after he has received the knowledge of the truth. Yes, there is. Now, one cannot transgress a law unless the law is over him. Believers are not, spiritually speaking, under the law of sin and death. Their mortal bodies may still be under the law of sin and death, but the believer is in soul and spirit passed from under

that law by regeneration. Neither are believers under the Mosaic law. Are not they, therefore, under any law at all? Indeed they are. They are under the law of God's grace, under the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And they do at times sin against grace. There is such a thing as grieving the Holy Spirit of God by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption. ·We do, at times, grieve the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our brethren. This we do when we offend one another. This we do when we transgress the law of our mother, the church, going against her counsel and setting at defiance her order and ride. The willful sin is the sin of the believer after receiving knowledge of the truth. It is sin full of one's own selfish will. Have you not sometimes seen willful children in families? They are generally children not liking to be controlled, wanting to have their own way. It has occurred at times in the experience of the church that brethren are left to themselves to have their own way, thus furnishing a warning example to others. Such brethren are "willful." They want to be independent, to be a law unto themselves. They are impatient of restraint, even though it be a loving restraint. Now, what is the remedy for this willful sin? Did Jesus die for such sin as that? Indeed, he did. He died for all the sins of all his people, whatsoever those sins have been or may be. He is the complete and perfect atonement for them all. Thus, if one sins willfully, what shall one do? Well, he cannot offer a sacrifice for that sin, because he is no more under the legal covenant under which bloody offerings were made for sin. That age has passed away. Neither will Christ descend to earth to suffer afresh for that sin. That is not necessary, Christ having already once for all made a finished and complete payment to divine justice for all sins of all his people. No, there remaineth no more sacrifice for this willful sin. What then? There remains a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. It is not the judgment and fiery indignation which remains, but the certain looking for it.

This is a “certain” and sure experience following upon the willful sin. There is no uncertainty or maybe so about it. Just so surely as one sins willfully after having been taught the truth, just so certainly will that one look for judgment and for fiery indignation. He will know in his own conscience that he has done wrong. Knowing that, he will be certain to look for some manifestation of the judgment of God and for some appearance of his fiery indignation, knowing full well that his sin merits punishment. Now, what will this certain looking for of judgment accomplish? It will destroy the enemy, that is, the adversary. Oh, what a mercy is this! It is not the believer who is destroyed by the willful sin. No, never. But. thanks be to God, the adversary which caused one to sin, he it is who is destroyed by this sure expectancy of judgment. In other words, all these things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. A burnt child dreads the fire, is an old saying. Nothing so well drives its lessons home to the soul as does one’s own experience. So by experiencing what it means to be full of one’s own will and to be led astray thereby one really finds out deliverance from that accursed enemy, one’s own fleshly nature. The experience of surely looking for some evil to come because one has done wrong, leads to one s being more and more fearful about doing wrong. Thus, does this sure expectation of judgment deliver the believer from the power of the adversary, the flesh, and makes one more and more aware of the treachery of one’s own fallen nature, so causing us to beware of it and correcting us from giving ear to evil counsel. These things we can speak of from our own personal experience, having handled ourselves the testimony of that which we here set forth. If it will help or comfort some other poor stumbling soul by the way, let God be praised. - H.H.L.

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 98, No. 6 – June, 1930

HOSEA II. 14, 15.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day whom she came up out of the land of Egypt."

God never forgets his people, but it cannot be said that they never forget him. They are full of waywardness and rebellion, which call forth his fatherly chastisements to reprove and correct them. It seems incredible that the people especially blessed with the presence of the Lord, and who had witnessed again and again his omnipotent power and omniscient oversight working in their behalf, could ever forget him or grow cold and indifferent toward him; not only so, but that they should give themselves over repeatedly to the foolish vanities and idolatries which they had before learned could bring them naught but shame and sorrow, seems far more incredible; but of all this was national Israel guilty at the time of the prophecy quoted above. This nation so singularly chosen of God from among all nations of the earth, whereby it pleased him to show forth his honor and glory, was seen lusting after heathenish idols, forsaking the law of her Maker and all his holy ordinances as prescribed by Moses, to seek the satisfaction of her natural inclinations in bowing the knee unto the gods of the Gentile nations about her. She had forgotten God's wonderful deliverance of her from Egyptian darkness and bondage, of his parting the Red Sea waters that she should pass through dryshod, and had

entirely lost sight of his guidance of her through the forty-year wilderness journey in the cloud by day and fire by night. In the time of great thirst he caused the rock to be smitten, that it should pour forth a stream for her sake; but it was forgotten, together with that time of great hunger when he sent manna from heaven for food. "The service of the holy temple, the intercession of the high priest and the offering for sin were all forgotten. God brought her safely through Jordan's swelling flood into the promised land (Canaan) flowing with milk and honey, gave her the victory over her enemies and established her in that country which he gave her for her own. What more evidences could she require of his faithfulness? And how did she requite Him! Her answers were rebellion, pride, depravity and idolatry. At the time of the prophet Hosea, Israel was steeped in national corruption and was standing on the verge of the Babylonian captivity, and in all this was an ensample unto the Israel of the gospel age, not very far distant. These events of national Jewish history typify spiritual truths imparted unto the gospel church at the present time. There is a proneness to wander felt by the child of God that often gives him great concern, and this very concern, so long as it is present, is in itself a safeguard against yielding to temptation, but when one comes to that state wherein his wanderings do not cause anxiety, he is treading very near Babylon's captivating lure. When in the christian experience one passes from law to gospel, nature to grace, first realizes a hope in the virtues of Jesus' blood and sings for the first time the new song of praise unto God, then in the ardor of his first love is lost entirely to view the weakness of the flesh which will later endeavor to ensnare him into yielding to its temptations. Were the new birth a change wrought in the old man of our Adamic nature, no such danger could exist, nor would one ever wander after the false gods of the flesh. The new birth is the coming into manifestation of a new creature, created in righteousness

and true holiness, but it is not a renovation of the old creature of sin and depravity. This makes the subject of grace a dual being experiencing the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. There are times in the experience of gospel churches, and of individuals, when there seems to be little or no response to spiritual things, and a coldness as of frost seems to nip in the bud every good and beautiful tendency to higher and better things; accompanying this condition there is also no manifestation of anxiety or grief concerning the matter, but instead an inclination to worldliness is manifested in a careless walk or conversation unbecoming the profession of a disciple of Christ, and a disposition to use the principles of Bible doctrine as a cloak to cover one's actions or utterances. This condition of a church or an individual answers to the condition of national Israel in the type at the time of Hosea's prophecy. The remedy for this condition is not in our hands, but in God's hand, and he will distribute to us of reproof and correction that we shall be ashamed before him for all our ways, and confessing our sins, be brought unto repentance and forgiveness. The child of God that bugs some fleshly idol to his heart is sowing to the flesh, and will of the flesh reap corruption. Do any of us ever strive to lay up for ourselves treasures on the earth! Scarcely any are guiltless on this score, but labor and sorrow are all we get for our pains. This state of affairs cannot long exist with the Lord's people, for he is a jealous God and will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," is a command that must be fulfilled, and as surely as God has determined it, so shall they most certainly be brought to serve him to the exclusion of all things else.

"I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness." To allure is to attract and entice. In being thus drawn into a snare one is not conscious of his danger, nor that he is being tempted. Our slight indulgences of fleshly impulses unconsciously lead

to more and more ungodliness, until we are enmeshed in a web from which we are unable to extricate ourselves. The wilderness referred to in the text is the utter worldliness of Babylon, and represents the wilderness of total depravity. It is waste howling. "Waste "because it is entirely destitute of any spiritual qualities wherewith to satisfy the desires of the new creature, and "howling "because it is full of the wild beasts of our nature, prowling around seeking what they may devour. When dominated by the flesh a child of God is drawn away by the lusts thereof and enticed. He is led into the wilderness, but when, within him, the motions of eternal life manifest themselves, total depravity becomes a mightily oppressive burden; then one knows the panting of the soul after God and what it is to be as a pelican in the wilderness, or as a sparrow alone upon the housetop; this is the depth of woe and the pit of miry clay. One deeply questions whether the Lord has forgotten to be gracious, and if his mercy is clean gone forever. I trust I do no violence to the text when I say that our fleshly lusts are those "principles which allure us toward Babylon, although the pronoun "I" in the text refers to God. Our heavenly Father not only takes cognizance of our fleshly wanderings, but ordains them, not as an end in themselves, but as evil out of which good shall come. We, his people, are not at liberty to do evil that good may come, but God has a perfect right to appoint such a path for us if he so chooses, and that without in the least impeaching any of his divine attributes. Whatsoever he does is right, because he does it. By causing his wayward children to realize the bitterness of the fruits of their idolatries, they are brought into that attitude of soul towards him of which he says: I "will speak comfortably unto her." Words able to comfort must be spoken by one fully acquainted with the needs of the case. Herein does the repentant child touch the Daysman, the Mediator, Christ Jesus, who was tempted in all points like as his people are, yet without sin, and is able to succor them

when tempted, for he is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He is the speaker of the comfortable words. Thus amidst the shattering of one's idolatries there arises a blessed communion with Christ as he comes near to comfort her who had wandered from her true Husband after false lovers.

"I will give her her vineyards from thence." The fruitfulness of the church arises from her realization of the vanities of the flesh and of the value of Christ to her. When mindful of her inherent weakness and infirmity, and aware that without him she can do nothing, she is not in danger of being taken captive by unbelief, but treads softly and humbly, leaning upon the staff of his precious promises. It is in her high-mindedness and self-confidence that temptation lurks, and until the Husbandman prunes these dead twigs the fruit of the vine will not come to perfection. It is in being made to realize the utter spiritual destitution of the wilderness of the carnal mind and heart that the soul is prepared for the growth of those vineyards whose grapes are the fruits of the Spirit enumerated by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatian Church. (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

"And the valley of Achor for a door of hope." This is the valley wherein Achan, he that troubled the peace of Israel with his relics of Jericho's corruption, was stoned to death with all his house. It is the valley of purging or of purification, and is the place wherein we are made to fellowship the sufferings of Jesus, who purged away all our dross and tin and purified us of unrighteousness. The golden wedge of self-confidence is often buried in our tents, but when the light of Jesus' truth discovers its hiding-place, a sense of guilt fills us with anguish, and we are found crying, "Lord, save us: we perish." This is the fiery trial wherein is wrought the refinement of faith's gold and the destruction of unbelief's wood and stubble. This deep distress which serves to tear

our idols from us and turns our faces toward the temple again, is the door of hope, or that by which hope enters anew and afresh into our souls. When we were drifting idly and calmly upon the smooth surface of fleshly security, we lost sight of our hope or any necessity for such an anchor. But in the midst of the storm its "anchor pull" is felt, for the severity of the tempest tests its security. If our hope were centered in some earthly thing, it could not endure the tempest's rage, but the christian's hope, though lost sight of in times of fleshly ease, is anchored in heaven above, in God's love and power and infinite mercy. The higher we are tossed on the billows of trouble, the nearer we approach unto our anchor (hope), which is never so precious as when earth and its idols perish.

"And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." She shall sing "there;" in that very place where has been witnessed her humiliation and distress she is made to sing; not in some other place, but there, where she has experienced so much hunger and thirst of spirit, shall she rejoice unspeakably. The very wilderness wherein her entanglement caused shame and sorrow shall be glad for her with the rising of the Sun of righteousness. The desert wherein her strength utterly failed shall blossom as the rose with the presence of Him, the Bridegroom of her soul. God does not need to remove us from amid desolate conditions in order to make us happy in him. A prison is just as good to dwell in as a palace if Jesus dwells with us there. God does not wait until our bodies die to impart unto us the doctrine of the resurrection and its experimental comforts and benefits, but while yet in this time state we come forth from death in Adam unto life in Christ, and, like Paul, die daily, but nevertheless live by the life of Christ, which dwells in us. Though the experience of the wilderness causes repentance in sackcloth and ashes, yet it is where Jesus speaks

comfortable words to his tried ones, and when he has revived their hope from the valley of trouble they find again that song in their heart which was theirs in the days of their spiritual youth, when in their first love and first enjoyment of a hope in the virtues of Jesus' blood. This song of praise, yea, even God's praise, testifies to the victory which God through Christ has given the church over all enemies of righteousness.

Unto all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, I affectionately tender the above message, I trust, in the fear of God.

Yours in gospel bonds,
HORACE H. LEFFERTS.
Warwick, N. Y., Dec . 11, 1907.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 76., No. 1.
JANUARY 1, 1908.

INFANT BAPTISM.

AN Arkansas reader of the SIGNS, who wants his name withheld, has asked our views on infant baptism. A very few words ought to suffice on this subject. The ordinances of the gospel church, including baptism, are for believers only. Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize none but believers. By belief, we do not mean that which usually passes current in the World to-day as belief, which is a matter of lip only, but we mean that belief which comes from the heart, and is the fruit of faith, the gift of God and the fruit of the Spirit. Philip told the eunuch there was no hindrance to his (the eunuch's) baptism if he (the eunuch) believed with all his heart. Therefore, the belief required as essential to baptism must be a whole-hearted belief, a belief wholly and

unreservedly in the wholeness of Jesus as being one's all in all. Such a belief can only be engendered in the soul by the operation and experimental work of the Holy Spirit, and springs from that faith which is derived from God, God-given. Now, as to whether it is right to baptize an infant must turn on the question as to whether that infant is a believer in Christ or not, after the manner of belief as outlined above. There is nothing too hard for the Lord to do, and we see no reason why God is not just as able to reveal his grace in and to an infant of tender years as in and to a man or woman of adult years. Age has nothing to do with baptism. One might be ninety years old and unfit for baptism, because of the absence of that belief which is the work of faith; again, one might be very young and yet have experimental knowledge of grace and the salvation it brings. We think we have personally known of some very young children, in one case an infant not old enough to talk, who died, and in dying acted in such a way as to lead one to no other conclusion than that Jesus was with them and made himself known to them in their last hours. Now if such children were able to make a confession of that which they felt, and expressed a desire for baptism, we see no reason why baptism dared be refused to them. The difficulty is, however, that infants, not being able to express themselves intelligently, cannot make what would be considered a satisfactory acknowledgment of belief, and would not be likely to ask to be baptized, and there is no authority in the Bible for baptizing one against his wish or inclination, whether or no. One might be a real believer, yet until he openly confessed that belief, and expressed a desire for baptism, he could not be baptized. We believe in the cases of some of the Lord's people their exercises of mind began in very early years, indeed so early that they cannot remember when they did begin, but until they were in a position to make confession of that experience they could not be baptized. Therefore we do not believe in

the baptism of infants, not because we believe infants incapable of being wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, but because infants, if so exercised, are not capable of such intelligent expression as would be necessary to baptize them. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 10.
May 15, 1916

ISAIAH VII. 14-16.

"BEHOLD, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

Last fall, walking along a street in Harrisburg, Pa., we came in sudden contact with one of those open-air street meetings in full sway on the curb, being addressed by a young man, a common product of our present-day so-called enlightenment, who was trying to speak from the above text, and telling his hearers that it was not inspired, and that the Lord never said any such thing. He proved it by saying that such afar off event as the birth of Christ could have been no "sign" to Ahaz, for Ahaz lived and died several hundred years before the birth of the Savior, and therefore such a sign could have had no meaning for him. How many were deceived by that young man that night, or how many were stirred to go home, get their Bibles and look it up for themselves, we cannot say, but any one who does look up and read this text can but see that the inferences drawn by the youngster were glaringly false. The "sign" of the virgin and her child was not given to

King Ahaz, but to the "house of David." Ahaz did not want any sign, and would not ask God for any, as is plainly said in verse twelve. Ahaz was perhaps the wickedest king Judah ever had, and such as he are not disposed while running riot in sin to turn to the Lord for a sign. The natural, sinful man is not hungering after anything in God's power to give. Thus the Lord goes over the head of this wicked ruler and gives the sign unto the "house of David," the tribe of Judah. It is fraught with significance only to those who then, and for several centuries to come, were in faith looking and hungering for his appearing. The house of David meant particularly the tribes of Judah, for after the death of Solomon the throne of David and the succession of David's line were kept within that tribe, since ten tribes seceded from the authority of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and went off under the leadership of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and were henceforth styled "Israel." Judah stood firm and faithful to the kingship of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, the lawful and rightful heir to the Davidic throne. The credit of this steadfastness belongs not to Judah, for it was the word of the Lord that kept her in her place, since God had said, "And unto his [So1omon's] son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there." Ten under Jeroboam and one under Rehoboam make eleven, but there were twelve tribes of Israel at the first, were there not? which one have we not accounted for? It is little Benjamin. As Judah took Benjamin in his care and keeping when they went down to Egypt to bring corn, (Genesis xliii.) it would seem that Judah exercised a sort of watchcare over him ever afterward, for in the general defection under Jeroboam Benjamin is annexed to Judah under fidelity to Rehoboam: "When Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin." There is this wonderful distinction to be kept in mind between the rival

kingdoms of Israel and Judah following upon the death of Solomon and up until the going into the Babylonian captivity; that whereas the crown in Israel shifted about from one family to another, never staying in any one family for very long, the crown in Judah continued evermore in one family (David's) 'with but very slight interruptions. The reason of this was not that the kings of Judah were better than those of Israel, but Judah had the blessing in the cluster which Israel did not. The kings of Judah were the ancestors of Jesus, whose right it was, when he should come, to sit upon David's throne. Thus the providence of God continually watched over the throne of Judah and kept the line of succession intact, while no such special care was exercised toward the throne of Israel, so that the crown among those ten tribes was tossed about as though it were subject to their ever-changing moods. This split between Judah and Israel lasted up until the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar. After the seventy years in Babylon, and the restoration to their own land under Cyrus, we do not read of this division being continued. It may take some such calamity as that to bring about a healing of the present divisions of Old School Baptists: an obliteration of personal and small differences by the overshadowing of some gigantic tribulation; who knows? After the coining 'out of Babylon with Zerubbabel they were first a dependency of the Persian empire, then of the Grecian, then of the Roman, but each of these monarchies allowed the Jews the privilege of being governed by men from among themselves, and this continued down to the death of Herod, in the lifetime of Jesus, thus fulfilling Genesis xlix. 10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [the securely prosperous Christ] come." Thus the sign spoken of in Isaiah vii. .14, was to the Davidic succession, and had no reference at all to wicked King Ahaz. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." Had Judah still been an independent nationality at the

time of Jesus' birth Joseph would have had a clear right to sit upon the throne of David. Jesus was both legally and after the flesh descended from David. According to the genealogy which Luke gives, Mary was a descendant of Nathan, David's son. According to Matthew, Joseph was a descendant of Solomon. To be sure, Jesus was not Joseph's natural son, but according to Jewish law he was none the less Joseph's legal heir, for he was the lawful son of Joseph's lawful wife, conceived while she was legally espoused to him. Be it remembered that by Jewish law a child did not have to be a man's natural child in order to be that one's lawful heir. According to the law of Moses, there were cases where a man would raise up seed unto his brother, would build up his brother's house. The Holy Ghost built up Joseph's house. This child's name is to be called Jesus, Jehovah-Savior, or Immanuel, which means, "God with us." This child of virgin birth, conceived by the Holy Ghost, is not alone God, nor yet alone man, but both God and man. "The tabernacle of God is with men." The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. The Word made flesh. Butter and honey are the sustenance of this child, to the end that he shall know to choose the good and refuse the evil. Looking at the language literally, it might signify that Jesus was born and reared in frugality, that he led a simple life, poor and lowly. Though King of kings and Lord of lords, the luxury and dazzle, pomp and show that usually attend the courts of monarchs, were alien to him. His glory, power, and his kingdom spiritual, real and eternal, are too fine and excellent for the gross, thickened perception of natural men. But we will have to look at the butter and honey other than literally to know how they enabled him to choose the good and refuse the evil. Simply living a plain, frugal life and eating plain diet never yet taught one the difference between good and evil. It is evident that couched in this butter and honey are deeper and more wonderful things than appear on the surface. The

wicked and hypocrite shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter. So, from the written word of God, we know that the honey and butter are things that the unquickened, unrepentant wicked shall never even see, let alone eat. It forms the delectable food of the righteous. "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey : I have drunk my wine with my milk," says the bridegroom, Jesus, the one of whom David speaks: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the 'upright: for the end of that man is peace." God made Jacob suck honey out of the flinty rock, and fed him with "butter of kine, and milk of sheep." Prominently among the provisions brought to David when he pitched his camp in Gilead were butter and honey. Job says that in his youth he washed his steps with butter. Butter was the cleansing of his way. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." This does not mean that a young man by reading the Bible and heeding it can cleanse his way. It means that one young in grace who cannot but heed the word ingrafted in his soul does cleanse his way. The entering of the Word into our lives renews our youth as the eagle's, releases from the burden of sin and condemnation, anchoring us unto the "inheritance incorruptible" by a lively hope. "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The entering of the Word cleanses the way of the spiritually young. The road, then, seems easy, the path firm and good. Thus wisdom unto salvation, which is the matter revealed in the "young man" by the living Word, is the "butter" that cleanses the way, washes the steps. N ow as to the "honey," the eyes of Jonathan were enlightened when he ate of the honey from the end of the rod, and Psalms xix. says, The commandment of the Lord enlightens the eyes. As the eating of honey, so is the knowledge of wisdom unto the soul. It is good not to eat honey when one is seeking to glorify himself, lest he have to vomit it. (See Proverbs xxv.) Self aggrandizement and the

knowledge Of divine wisdom will not mix any more than oil and water. This is why a truly called minister of the gospel cannot be puffed up. He must have the knowledge of wisdom in order to preach (he is not a preacher if he has it not), and this prevents his using his gift to his own ends. As sure as he tried to dose, and succeeded, he would be compelled to vomit the "honey" and lose his gift. So it seems the butter and honey are wisdom and knowledge. These were the sustenance of Immanuel. He was filled with the knowledge and wisdom of the Highest. " Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation." "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee," said the Lord to Solomon, and so, in a figure, to Christ, the spiritual Solomon. The Preacher says, "My heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." – Eccl. i. 16. "God giveth to a man that is good in his sight [Jesus], wisdom, and knowledge." The people, astonished at the speech of Jesus, asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" Luke tells that "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and. the grace of God was upon him." And further, " Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Thus it would seem not only that Jesus was filled with knowledge and wisdom, but that there was an increase or growth in these things such as would be signified by his eating the butter and honey, since eating is a process of nature in attaining growth and development. This knowledge and wisdom were his, that he should know to choose the good and refuse 'the evil. Not that he should know the difference between good and evil, not that he should know to tell the truth and not to lie, to love and not to hate, to think good thoughts and not bad ones. His .very divine nature made it impossible for him to sin, either in thought, imaginings or deeds. But the wisdom and knowledge given him of the Father enabled him to choose between the sheep and the goats, between the elect and the wicked, between

those that were in him from the foundation of the world and those who were not. It is in this sense that the butter and honey eaten by him, the knowledge and wisdom in which he grew and increased, enabled him to make manifest and effective the covenant of election sealed by the Father from the beginning, calling out and apart from the world the church, and saving it with an everlasting salvation. When we speak of the elect as "good," and of the nonelect as "evil," we do not mean for a moment that there was any difference in them by nature. In Adam they are all alike wicked. But the elect had a standing in Christ before the foundation of the world that the wicked never had, and in that they were thus associated in the covenant in him, they were good in the sight of the Father for Christ's sake. Their decreed connection and relationship with Christ eternally was all the goodness the elect had, otherwise, in Adam they were vile and corrupt as any that are never saved. He is the good Shepherd, he knew and knows his sheep, calls them by name and they follow him. There is no danger of his passing by even the least of the sheep. No need to sing, "Pass me not, O gentle Savior." To those on his left hand, he says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Not the slightest danger that any of the sheep will ever hear those words banishing them from the presence of God. This separation of the wheat from the chaff, of the precious from the vile, is accomplished through the knowledge and wisdom of the Highest, as it abode in the Immanuel, is because he ate "butter and honey." Tin: last words of our text fix the date as to when this ability shall be Immanuel's to choose the good and refuse the evil: "The land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." At the time this sign was given unto Judah, Syria and Israel had entered into a conspiracy to get the throne away from the Davidic family. For this reason,if for no other, Judah abhorred both Syria and Israel. But before the child

(Immanuel) shall know to choose the good and refuse the evil the kingdoms of both Israel and Syria shall cease. This was literally fulfilled, for both Syria and Israel lost their separate nationality and became dependencies, first of Persia, then of Greece, then of Rome. Perhaps it will be said that this was also true of Judah, and so it was, but all the time that Judah was a tributary of each of the world powers in its turn each succeeding monarch appointed his governors of Judea from the tribe of Judah. To Syria and Israel were shown no such distinction. These governors were not of the Davidic line, it is true, but they were Judeans and that was something.

Written at the request of brother A. L. Holden, of Durham, N. C.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 23
December 1, 1914

ISAIAH VII. 14-16.

"BEHOLD, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

Last fall, walking along a street in Harrisburg, Pa., we came in sudden contact with one of those open-air street meetings in full sway on the curb, being addressed by a young man, a common product of our present-day so-called enlightenment, who was trying to speak from the above text, and telling his

hearers that it was not inspired, and that the Lord never said any such thing. He proved it by saying that such afar off event as the birth of Christ could have been no “sign” to Ahaz, for Ahaz lived and died several hundred years before the birth of the Savior, and therefore such a sign could have had no meaning for him. How many were deceived by that young man that night, or how many were stirred to go home, get their Bibles and look it up for themselves, we cannot say, but any one who does look up and read this text can but see that the inferences drawn by the youngster were glaringly false. The “sign” of the virgin and her child was not given to King Ahaz, but to the “house of David.” Ahaz did not want any sign, and would not ask God for any, as is plainly said in verse twelve. Ahaz was perhaps the wickedest king Judah ever had, and such as he are not disposed while running riot in sin to turn to the Lord for a sign. The natural, sinful man is not hungering after anything in God’s power to give. Thus the Lord goes over the head of this wicked ruler and gives the sign unto the “house of David,” the tribe of Judah. It is fraught with significance only to those who then, and for several centuries to come, were in faith looking and hungering for his appearing. The house of David meant particularly the tribes of Judah, for after the death of Solomon the throne of David and the succession of David’s line were kept within that tribe, since ten tribes seceded from the authority of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, and went off under the leadership of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and were henceforth styled “Israel.” Judah stood firm and faithful to the kingship of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, the lawful and rightful heir to the Davidic throne. The credit of this steadfastness belongs not to Judah, for it was the word of the Lord that kept her in her place, since God had said, “And unto his [So1omon’s] son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.” Ten

under Jeroboam and one under Rehoboam make eleven, but there were twelve tribes of Israel at the first, were there not? which one have we not accounted for? It is little Benjamin. As Judah took Benjamin in his care and keeping when they went down to Egypt to bring corn, (Genesis xliii.) it would seem that Judah exercised a sort of watchcare over him ever afterward, for in the general defection under Jeroboam Benjamin is annexed to Judah under fidelity to Rehoboam: "When Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin." There is this wonderful distinction to be kept in mind between the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah following upon the death of Solomon and up until the going into the Babylonian captivity; that whereas the crown in Israel shifted about from one family to another, never staying in any one family for very long, the crown in Judah continued evermore in one family (David's) 'with but very slight interruptions. The reason of this was not that the kings of Judah were better than those of Israel, but Judah had the blessing in the cluster which Israel did not. The kings of Judah were the ancestors of Jesus, whose right it was, when he should come, to sit upon David's throne. Thus the providence of God continually watched over the throne of Judah and kept the line of succession intact, while no such special care was exercised toward the throne of Israel, so that the crown among those ten tribes was tossed about as though it were subject to their ever-changing moods. This split between Judah and Israel lasted up until the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar. After the seventy years in Babylon, and the restoration to their own land under Cyrus, we do not read of this division being continued. It may take some such calamity as that to bring about a healing of the present divisions of Old School Baptists: an obliteration of personal and small differences by the overshadowing of some gigantic tribulation; who knows? After the coining 'out of Babylon with Zerubbabel they were

first a dependency of the Persian empire, then of the Grecian, then of the Roman, but each of these monarchies allowed the Jews the privilege of being governed by men from among themselves, and this continued down to the death of Herod, in the lifetime of Jesus, thus fulfilling Genesis xlix. 10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [the securely prosperous Christ] come." Thus the sign spoken of in Isaiah vii. .14, was to the Davidic succession, and had no reference at all to wicked King Ahaz. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." Had Judah still been an independent nationality at the time of Jesus' birth Joseph would have had a clear right to sit upon the throne of David. Jesus was both legally and after the flesh descended from David. According to the genealogy which Luke gives, Mary was a descendant of Nathan, David's son. According to Matthew, Joseph was a descendant of Solomon. To be sure, Jesus was not Joseph's natural son, but according to Jewish law he was none the less Joseph's legal heir, for he was the lawful son of Joseph's lawful wife, conceived while she was legally espoused to him. Be it remembered that by Jewish law a child did not have to be a man's natural child in order to be that one's lawful heir. According to the law of Moses, there were cases where a man would raise up seed unto his brother, would build up his brother's house. The Holy Ghost built up Joseph's house. This child's name is to be called Jesus, Jehovah-Savior, or Immanuel, which means, "God with us." This child of virgin birth, conceived by the Holy Ghost, is not alone God, nor yet alone man, but both God and man. "The tabernacle of God is with men." The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. The Word made flesh. Butter and honey are the sustenance of this child, to the end that he shall know to choose the good and refuse the evil. Looking at the language literally, it might signify that Jesus was born and reared in frugality, that he led a simple life, poor and lowly. Though King of

kings and Lord of lords, the luxury and dazzle, pomp and show that usually attend the courts of monarchs, were alien to him. His glory, power, and his kingdom spiritual, real and eternal, are too fine and excellent for the gross, thickened perception of natural men. But we will have to look at the butter and honey other than literally to know how they enabled him to choose the good and refuse the evil. Simply living a plain, frugal life and eating plain diet never yet taught one the difference between good and evil. It is evident that couched in this butter and honey are deeper and more wonderful things than appear on the surface. The wicked and hypocrite shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter. So, from the written word of God, we know that the honey and butter are things that the unquickened, unrepentant wicked shall never even see, let alone eat. It forms the delectable food of the righteous. "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey : I have drunk my wine with my milk," says the bridegroom, Jesus, the one of whom David speaks: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the 'upright: for the end of that man is peace." God made Jacob suck honey out of the flinty rock, and fed him with "butter of kine, and milk of sheep." Prominently among the provisions brought to David when he pitched his camp in Gilead were butter and honey. Job says that in his youth he washed his steps with butter. Butter was the cleansing of his way. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." This does not mean that a young man by reading the Bible and heeding it can cleanse his way. It means that one young in grace who cannot but heed the word ingrafted in his soul does cleanse his way. The entering of the Word into our lives renews our youth as the eagle's, releases from the burden of sin and condemnation, anchoring us unto the "inheritance incorruptible" by a lively hope. "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The entering of the

Word cleanses the way of the spiritually young. The road, then, seems easy, the path firm and good. Thus wisdom unto salvation, which is the matter revealed in the "young man" by the living Word, is the "butter" that cleanses the way, washes the steps. N ow as to the "honey," the eyes of Jonathan were enlightened when he ate of the honey from the end of the rod, and Psalms xix. says, The commandment of the Lord enlightens the eyes. As the eating of honey, so is the knowledge of wisdom unto the soul. It is good not to eat honey when one is seeking to glorify himself, lest he have to vomit it. (See Proverbs xxv.) Self aggrandizement and the knowledge Of divine wisdom will not mix any more than oil and water. This is why a truly called minister of the gospel cannot be puffed up. He must have the knowledge of wisdom in order to preach (he is not a preacher if he has it not), and this prevents his using his gift to his own ends. As sure as he tried to dose, and succeeded, he would be compelled to vomit the "honey" and lose his gift. So it seems the butter and honey are wisdom and knowledge. These were the sustenance of Immanuel. He was filled with the knowledge and wisdom of the Highest. " Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation." "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee," said the Lord to Solomon, and so, in a figure, to Christ, the spiritual Solomon. The Preacher says, "My heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." – Eccl. i. 16. "God giveth to a man that is good in his sight [Jesus], wisdom, and knowledge." The people, astonished at the speech of Jesus, asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" Luke tells that "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and. the grace of God was upon him." And further, " Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Thus it would seem not only that Jesus was filled with knowledge and wisdom, but that there was an increase or growth in these things such as would be signified by his

eating the butter and honey, since eating is a process of nature in attaining growth and development. This knowledge and wisdom were his, that he should know to choose the good and refuse ‘the evil. Not that he should know the difference between good and evil, not that he should know to tell the truth and not to lie, to love and not to hate, to think good thoughts and not bad ones. His .very divine nature made it impossible for him to sin, either in thought, imaginings or deeds. But the wisdom and knowledge given him of the Father enabled him to choose between the sheep and the goats, between the elect and the wicked, between those that were in him from the foundation of the world and those who were not. It is in this sense that the butter and honey eaten by him, the knowledge and wisdom in which he grew and increased, enabled him to make manifest and effective the covenant of election sealed by the Father from the beginning, calling out and apart from the world the church, and saving it with an everlasting salvation. When we speak of the elect as “good,” and of the nonelect as “evil,” we do not mean for a moment that there was any difference in them by nature. In Adam they are all alike wicked. But the elect had a standing in Christ before the foundation of the world that the wicked never had, and in that they were thus associated in the covenant in him, they were good in the sight of the Father for Christ’s sake. Their decreed connection and relationship with Christ eternally was all the goodness the elect had, otherwise, in Adam they were vile and corrupt as any that are never saved. He is the good Shepherd, he knew and knows his sheep, calls them by name and they follow him. There is no danger of his passing by even the least of the sheep. No need to sing, “Pass me not, O gentle Savior.” To those on his left hand, he says, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Not the slightest danger that any of the sheep will ever hear those words banishing them from the presence of

God. This separation of the wheat from the chaff, of the precious from the vile, is accomplished through the knowledge and wisdom of the Highest, as it abode in the Immanuel, is because he ate “butter and honey.” Tin: last words of our text fix the date as to when this ability shall be Immanuel’s to choose the good and refuse the evil: “The land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.” At the time this sign was given unto Judah, Syria and Israel had entered into a conspiracy to get the throne away from the Davidic family. For this reason,if for no other, Judah abhorred both Syria and Israel. But before the child (Immanuel) shall know to choose the good and refuse the evil the kingdoms of both Israel and Syria shall cease. This was literally fulfilled, for both Syria and Israel lost their separate nationality and became dependencies, first of Persia, then of Greece, then of Rome. Perhaps it will be said that this was also true of Judah, and so it was, but all the time that Judah was a tributary of each of the world powers in its turn each succeeding monarch appointed his governors of Judea from the tribe of Judah. To Syria and Israel were shown no such distinction. These governors were not of the Davidic line, it is true, but they were Judeans and that was something.

Written at the request of brother A. L. Holden, of Durham, N. C.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 23
December 1, 1914

ISAIAH XI. 6, 7.

"THE wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a young child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."

Pursuant to a request from a reader of the SIGNS, living in Chicago, Ill., we will try to give our views on the above subject. Like so many other prophecies in the book of Isaiah that looked forward through unborn time to the gospel age, this text quoted above also describes in figurative language that which the Lord's people in the gospel dispensation were to witness and experience, but which was never apprehended by those who lived under the law, except by faith. Here we have set forth that which is contrary to nature, which the nature of men can never bring about, but a condition which, in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, is to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the effect of the grace of God. It is not natural for a wolf to dwell with a lamb, nor for a leopard to lie down with a kid, neither for a calf to dwell with a young lion and a fatling. Further, it is not natural for the cow, which enjoys the vegetarian diet, to eat with the bear, which loves to devour flesh; nor for the lion to eat straw like the ox. All these incidents, though contrary to nature, are to be effected, because "a little child shall lead them." This means that nature is to be brought into subjection, and held there, by the Spirit of Christ Jesus, by his meek and lowly and gentle Spirit, which shall subdue the vile passions of men and shall cause them to dwell together in gospel love and fellowship as they shall be brought by the power of God's grace to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. We have been hearing a great deal for the past few years about an era of worldwide peace to soon be ushered in, when the nations of the earth shall learn war no

more, when the swords shall be beaten into plough-shares and the spears into pruninghooks. This is an outcome, no doubt, devoutly to be desired, for we all agree that war and strife are dreadful things, but these things which have been resident in the nature of man from the first of his creation can never be abolished through human inventions and man's ingenuity. If worldwide and everlasting peace is ever to prevail over a world weary of war, we must look to a higher power than our own. Such an age can only dawn upon us through the victorious operation of God's holy Spirit subduing evil and vanquishing all that is opposed to godliness, and giving rise to righteousness and wisdom that must prevail in and through all who inhabit the earth. There never can be any compromise with evil, nor any treaty with antichrist; these must be utterly destroyed if righteousness and peace are to prevail unmolested. So the prophet Isaiah through the divine telescope of faith was looking down the years seven hundred years beyond the period in which he was living, and beholding the spiritual kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. In this church of God is that peace that passes understanding, the peace which the world can neither give nor take away, but which is eternal to all the elect of God, through the atonement made for their sins in the sacrificial work of Jesus. In this church are both Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, bond and free. The Lord himself, not the Missionary societies invented by men, brings his sons from afar and his daughters from the ends of the earth and calls them by effectual grace unto godly repentance, working in them by his resurrection power to believe on Him who raised Christ from the dead. In this way all the nations flow up unto the house of the Lord, and the mountain of the Lord's house is established in the mountains. This is something that is going on to-day, though men cannot see it with their natural powers. The kingdom of heaven is in the

world and is within the subjects of divine grace. Jesus is living and reigning in his kingdom in the hearts of his elect, gathered from every nation which is under heaven. He has been gathering them into his gospel kingdom, he is now so gathering them, and he will continue so to gather them until the last vessel of mercy, beforehand chosen unto glory, shall have been brought into this church of our God, and with this gathering men have had nothing to do. It has been all the result of that still small voice which, like the wind, blows where it lists. It has not been by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. As for man, he is altogether vanity, and all his works are a vain show. All of them are utterly contemned before God. God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. He has invented ways to save the heathen from their sins and to bring them to God, he has schemed to win the whole world for Christ, and now he is scheming to abolish war and to usher in the millennium. All these inventions are a vain and idle show, and shall pass away into nothingness when the breath of God shall blow upon them. It will be noticed in the words of our text at the beginning of this article that, in the list of animals given, a wild animal is coupled with a tame animal. From the Jew standpoint, the Gentiles were to them aliens and foreigners, without any right to participate in the services of the legal sanctuary, and strangers from the covenant made with them by the hand of Moses. Therefore, in Isaiah xi. 6, 7, the Gentiles are represented by the wild animals and the Jews by the tame ones. The declaration, therefore, is that the time was to come when the barrier, or middle wall of partition, between Jew and Gentile was to be abolished through the work of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, and of the twain was to be made one new man. The Gentiles were no more to be strangers and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel, but fellow-citizens with the saints and with the household of God. (See Eph. ii. 12-22.) These wild ones were

to be brought into close spiritual relationship with the elect of God among the Jews, so all would be one body through one Lord, having one hope, one faith and one baptism. The gospel was first preached to the Jews. After this, the gospel was declared to the Gentiles. In the Acts we see many striking instances of God's work among the Gentiles, how that true believers were raised up among them, how that the prejudice between Jew and Gentile was overcome through grace, and all lived together in the church of God, forgetting their past differences and forgiving one another their transgressions. Peter, the Jew, was sent for to preach the word of the kingdom to Cornelius, the Roman. We doubt if he would have gone on this errand had he not been prepared there-unto beforehand by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, knit at the four corners, containing all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Herein was revealed to Peter the truth that in God's covenant of election were included all the peoples of the world, that election is not confined to the Jews, but that God has a people among all kindreds, tribes and tongues that dwell on the earth. Having had this matter shown to him, Peter's prejudice against the Gentiles was overcome, and he was ready to preach the gospel to Cornelius. Here we see the wolf and the lamb dwelling together. Cornelius belonged to a nation that then dominated the world and ruled over the Jews, who to the Romans were a subject people. However, here we see an individual of a world-ruling people made willing to sit at the feet of a disciple of the n1eek and lowly and despised Jesus, anxious to hear the word of truth, and believing in it with all his heart. Again, Saul of Tarsus, like a lion, went about the country hunting down and persecuting the christians. But the time came when this roaring lion was subjugated by the mighty hand of God and brought under the sway of divine grace. He then was made to eat straw like the ox, to desire

the same spiritual bread of life as the Jews whom he had been persecuting for believing in Christ. The little child Jesus led Saul and changed him into the humble Paul; the same little child Jesus brought Peter to preach to Cornelius, and caused Cornelius to embrace the formerly despised Jew in gospel love and fellowship. We believe, therefore, that the words of our text apply not to some far distant millennium framed in human dreams, but we think the spiritual meaning of Isaiah's words are realized in the gospel kingdom of the Lord, where dwell his honor and glory, and where is the habitation of his throne. What a great variety of natural dispositions and temperaments there is among the members of Christ's body. Some of us are like lions, others like wolves, and so on. But all are chastened and subdued by reigning grace and made to dwell together in unity, when if left to ourselves, to act our individual likes and dislikes, we would be quarreling and contending all the time. All these strifes and contentions are annulled by the reign of the childlike Spirit of Jesus, causing his people to pray for one another, to bear one another's burdens, to esteem others better than themselves, all because he has taken out of them the stony heart and has given them a heart of flesh, wherein he has written his royal law: Lore one another. The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation. Though we may long look for some outward sign of approaching worldwide peace, we may never see it so long as man's nature remains as it is and earthly governments continue to be organized as they are. However, in the realm of Spirit, in that world which lies beyond the reach of all mortal senses, in that church of our God which is in the world, but is not of the world, peace has already come through the death of Jesus. This is a peace which passes understanding and abides world without end. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 11
June 1, 1919

ISAIAH XXX. 33

"For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep, and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

In answer to a request from a friend, we attempt to give our thoughts on the above passage; hut in order to do so, must glance at the whole chapter in brief. From the first verse of this thirtieth chapter clown to and including the seventh, the Lord declares the utter foolishness of Israel's resorting to an alliance with Egypt against the coming invasion of the Assyrians under Sennacherib. The children of Israel as a nation are here spoken of as "rebellious children" who take counsel of Egypt instead of the Lord, who resort to fleshly dependence of trusting Jehovah for deliverance. Note the warning of Rabshakeh in chapter thirty-six: "Lo, thou trusteth in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and decree it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him." The seeking of help against the enemy, at. the hand of Egypt, was in defiance of God's word in Deuteronomy xvii. 16: "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.'' There could never be any help to God's people come out of Egypt. There in that land had been their bondage and slavery. Any attempt to go back that way could only spell disaster for them. Nevertheless, faced with the invading host of Sennacherib, they resorted for help to their former land of bondage. The Lord would surely punish them for this, but would save a remnant of them according to his grace. Of the nation of

Israel at this time the Lord said, “This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.” These rebellious characters desired no vision from the Lord and begged the prophets not to speak right things, but to speak smooth things and to prophesy deceits. One cannot help but be amazed at the blindness of the people, and yet he professed, not real, children of God are the same to-day. They do not want to hear the truth, they want their vanity gratified and desire to be left alone to sleep on in ease undisturbed by the truth, wedded to their own gods, allured by their own foolish imaginings. The condemnation of the wicked draws every moment

nearer, but they heed not the preceeding warnings of disaster and rush headlong to their judgment, to that Tophet ordained for them of old. When king Josiah reigned in Jerusalem he was a God-fearing man and sought to restore the kingdom from the idolatries which it had fallen into under the influence of wicked kings prior to him. This place Tophet had been used before Josiah's time as a place of human sacrifices where mothers and fathers in worshiping the god Molech had caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire. This heathenish practice, Josiah had stopped. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 10.) In this very Tophet where some of Israel had worshipped Molech with fire, right there the Lord had determined to also make a more terrible slaughter of their enemies. And so it proved. For while Israel did seek help at the hand of Egypt, it turned out altogether vain, just as God said it would, and the real help and deliverance came from God himself; and Sennacherib and his army were turned back from Jerusalem without Israel's fighting a single stroke. Read Isaiah xxxvii. 36-38: “Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they [the Israelites] arose early in the morning, behold, they [the enemy] were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed,

and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead." Thus is seen the terrible vengeance visited upon the enemies of Israel in the valley of Tophet, the place of fire before ordained to be used for that same purpose, a place deep and large, with plenty of wood, needing naught but the breath of the Lord to kindle it that it might be verily as brimstone to the utter consumption of all the enemies of righteousness. Thus, we see the deliverance of Hezekiah and his kingdom from their enemies was glorious, for the Lord did it all and no human help or cooperation was needed. After this, the deliverance of Israel from Babylon was even more glorious than Hezekiah's, yet came about the same great way, by the power of God. And after the deliverance from Babylon, the deliverance of the redeemed from death and condemnation by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was more glorious than all. As Tophet was the place of burning prepared for the king of their enemies, Sennacherib, so figuratively it is a type of the lake of fire and brimstone, the second death, prepared for the devil and his angels. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." - Rev. xxi. 8. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." — Rev. xix. 20. Thus, Tophet is a figure of the final and ultimate destruction of antichrist and of all that loves and makes a lie. Tophet was located in the valley of Hinnom outside the city of Jerusalem, and spiritual Tophet is most certainly outside the

new Jerusa1cm. Note what Jeremiah says about it, “The children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall not more be called Tophet, nor, The valley of the son of Hinnom, but, The valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. And the carcasses of this people shall he meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away,” Can any one imagine such dreadful calamity as above foretold? It is horrible above all conception. If we turn to the nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah we see again all this disaster that was to befall Jerusalem, and which did befall her in the year 70 A. D., graphically pictured in all its horror. But now, if our Bible readers will continue on through Jeremiah as well as through Isaiah, in the latter chapters of these prophets, as well as of Ezekiel and Daniel, they shall see foretold the final destruction of Babylon, which means not merely the destruction of Ancient Babylon, but of the Babylon of the present time which holds sway throughout the world. This Babylon of false religion is doomed to destruction and the Lord has prepared a Tophet for her. As the Lord fought against Sennacherib to deliver Israel of old from the Assyrians, so will he at Armageddon deliver his People from all the nations gathered against Jerusalem to battle. “And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eves shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall conic to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among

them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague." — Zech. xiv. 12-15. The horror of this great battle of Armageddon, yet to be fulfilled, is still further portrayed in Ezekiel, thirty-ninth chapter, where we are told that so great will be the slaughter in the ranks of the armies of the nations that come to battle against the Jews regathered to the holy land that it will take seven years to burn up the wreckage left from the battle and will take over seven months to bury the dead, all the people working at it continually. No such battle as this with such disastrous results has ever yet been fought in the history of the world. It is yet future. Ezekiel thirty-ninth chapter tells of it. The valley of Hinnom where Tophet was located is here called "The valley of Hamon-gog." "For then shall be great tribulation of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." - Matt. xxiv. 21. In all this wreckage predicted to come upon the nations at the end of the Gentile period, the true children of God will dwell safely under the wings of the Almighty. Like Noah safe in the ark from the destruction which then overwhelmed and destroyed the world, so the church of God shall dwell safe in Christ when worlds are crumbling into ruin and when the beast and the false prophet and all who worship them shall be turned into the final Tophet of destruction from the presence of the Lord and all his holy angels. "And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm." "Through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down," and not through human means or agencies. "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept:

and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel." "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." What blessed promises is the Lord and who wait patiently for him. These shall renew their strength and shall soar above as on eagles' wings. Blessed be his holy name, he who causeth us to triumph by Christ Jesus. - H.H.L.

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 98, No. 3 – March 1930

JAMES 2.26.

"FOR as the body Without the spirit is dead, so faith Without works is dead also."

We shall try to write upon this Scripture at the request of Mrs. E. F. Reed, of Williamsville, Missouri. This friend of the SIGNS is at present a member of the Methodist denomination, but has for a long time been dissatisfied with the teachings and practices of that body of people, and wishes to unite with the Old School Baptists, but lives nowhere near any of our people. If any one who reads this article knows of any Old Baptists living in Wayne County, Missouri, we ask that one to please notify Mrs. Reed of same at her address given above. Mrs. Reed's letter to us is withheld from publication at her request, much to our regret, as it shows she is surely taught of the Lord in a wonderful way.

Coming directly to our subject, we wish to say that the expression, "The body without the spirit," means the body without the breath. The word "spirit" refers not to God's

Spirit, but to the breath which is in every human being. When the breath leaves the body the body is dead. James uses this to illustrate faith without works. As the breath is the life of our mortal bodies, and manifests itself in action, so works are the activity of faith. James means that where faith is, there works will be. Works do not, cannot bring about that faith which is the gift of God, but when God imparts his divine faith in the life of the believer, that faith will show itself in results which he calls “works.” If there are no actions or works of faith, then the faith is not there. God does not operate by his Holy Spirit in the believer and allow that work not to show itself. Wherever the Spirit of God is in operation it will show itself outwardly in “works.” Old School Baptists are often accused of not believing in works, but this is utterly false. We do assuredly believe in works, not works which bring about salvation, but salvation which brings about works. We believe, because the Bible so teaches, that good works are the effect of grace; we do not believe that works bring about grace. Paul writes in his epistle to the Romans of justification by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; James writes in his letter of justification by works, yet there is not the shadow of a conflict between the doctrine of Paul and the doctrine of James. Paul is speaking of that which justifies the sinner in the sight of God: the resurrection of Christ from the dead. James writes of that which justifies us in the sight of our brethren in our church relationship here in the world. The works or acts of the believer do not justify him in God’s sight at all, but our works, "which are the issue of our faith, do show to our brethren whether our profession is a dead or a living one. No matter how much we might profess to our brethren that we love them, if we do not show by our actions that we love them, how are they to really know that we love them? Where the walk does not consist with one’s profession, that one’s profession or faith lacks vitality, just as the body without the breath is dead. You see,

therefore, Paul is treating of the doctrine of justification from God's viewpoint, while James is thinking and writing of that same matter from the viewpoint of the brethren. Just as the resurrection of Christ from the dead justifies all the elect in the sight of God, so does the power or spirit of that same resurrection in the life of the child of God here in the world bring about certain activities or "works" that justify him in the sight of the church here in the world. God gave Abraham this gift of faith, which is the fruit of his Spirit. This faith in Abraham caused Abraham to do certain things which justified or proved the faith that was in him. It caused him to take his son Isaac, the child of promise, without staggering, or doubting the promise of God, and to be about to offer the child upon the altar. Here the renunciation of Abraham's paternal affection at God's command proves or justifies the character of Abraham's faith in God. His offering Isaac did not produce that faith, but the faith produced the obedience. Likewise, Rahab the harlot proved the faith that was in her when she hid the messengers, or spies, from Israel, and sent them out another way. Read Joshua, second chapter. Rahab was literally a stranger to these men that came from Israel, and they were strangers to her, nevertheless she knew "the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." Now how did this woman, naturally a stranger to Israel and to Israel's God, know that the God of Israel was the only true God? She knew it because God had given her faith to know it. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." This faith in Rahab caused her to hide the spies which came from Israel. and to send them away in safety. The hiding these spies did not bring about the faith, but the faith caused her to do the deed, the "work." It is not what we say that makes us followers of Christ; our actions or the life that we live cause our brethren to have or not to have confidence in our profession. What profit is it to say that we

have faith if our works do not Show that we have faith? Gan faith save us? That is, can mere profession establish or confirm us in the eyes of the church as being a child of God? If one is saved by grace, he is saved by grace all the time. He has not been saved by grace, nor he shall not be saved by grace, but he "is" saved by grace all the way along. "By grace are ye saved," says the apostle, putting it in the present tense. Thus God's effectual grace in the life of the believer works an effect that is seen by the church, so that he is seen to be saved by his "works;" that is, his works manifest to the brethren that he is saved by grace. Then, too, "if a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" That is, if we love not our brother whom we have seen, what evidence have we that we love God invisible? The evidence that we love God is that we love that which is begotten of God, and if we do love the people of God we need not to be telling them of it all the time; they will know by our actions whether we love them or not. Actions speak louder than words. Our works will prove our love for them, and so will we be justified before them by our works. which shall be the fruit of our faith. Can the fig tree bear olive berries? Can the vine bear figs? The figs do prove. that it is a fig tree, the olives that it is an olive tree, the grapes that it is a vine, and so on. Likewise do love and humility and prayerfulness prove that the faith divine of God is in one's life. Where this faith is, there will contrite repentance be; there also will be hungerings and thirstings after righteousness, sincere soul-pantings after God. These are the works of faith, and by these, and many such works, is the believer proved or justified in the esteem of all other believers. When the humble believer comes in fearfulness and trembling before the church to seek the ordinance of baptism and a home with

other believers, it is not so much what that one says that gives the brethren confidence in his experience as the manner of his coming. His humility and sincerity are more eloquent than words, and do show in the forehead the mark of the lowly Galilean. The fact that our friend Mrs. Reed is inquiring for the Old School Baptists with a desire to cast in her lot with them is a favorable "work," manifesting the nature of the faith that is in her. A person is often known by the company he or she keeps. If one loves Old School Baptists and fellowships their preaching, that one will most likely be found around where Old Baptists are. He will be moved to hunt them up and to enjoy their company. Such a "work" would beautifully justify the faith of that one. Among the churches that we are trying to serve here in Virginia, we have in the different congregations a few who never say much, but show by their actions year after year that they are taught of God and have been with Jesus. We have no doubt that the churches here would be willing to receive these for baptism without hesitation, even if they themselves were not able to express much in words, should they come before the church. Their works have long proved or justified the faith that is in them, and are more satisfactory than words could ever be. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 17.
September 1, 1916.

JEREMIAH VIII. 22.

"Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

Jeremiah was the Lord’s mouth to the children of Israel in evil times. He began his ministry, as he himself says, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah king of Judah. We have but to turn the pages of our Bibles to second Kings, the twenty-second and twenty- third chapters, to find the record of this king Josiah. He began to reign in Judah when but a boy of eight years and the length of his reign was thirty- one years. During this reign of thirty- one years, Josiah did all he Could to stem the tide of corruption which had swept in over the affairs of Judah, for he was a good king and desired to do that which was right in the sight of the law of God. He revived the covenant of Moses which the people had for gotten,called the attention of the nation to their departure from the right way, overthrew the temples and altars of false religion which the Jews had set up under former rulers who had taught and encouraged them in the way of evil, and rallied his subjects to the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Notwithstanding all this good effort on the part of this conscientious king, and notwithstanding the faithful ministry of Jeremiah, the tide of evil which had set in among the Jews was too strong against all these good intentions and neither Josiah nor Jeremiah could successfully ward off the day of Judah’s calamity. After the death of Josiah, matters quickly went from bad to worse. Josiah’s successor reigned only three months, was then imprisoned by the king of Egypt who swept with his army over the land, and died in Egypt. The next king was but a slavish ruler subject to the will of the king of Egypt, and though he reigned for eleven years, was afraid to call his soul his own. Then came another king who ruled but three months as tributary to the king of Babylon who had, in the meantime, driven the forces of Egypt out of Judah and taken possession of it himself. After this, events incident to Judah’s decline followed swiftly until we read of the first Carrying away of the people of Judah captive to Babylon. Thus, after

Josiah's good reign, Judah never knew any peace again. The forces of Egypt and the armies of Babylon fought over the land, first one being successful and then the other, until it resulted in the triumph of Babylon and the captivity of Judah. Now, Jeremiah lived all through these stirrings and was himself among those carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, we see that part of his ministry was fulfilled in Jerusalem before the carrying away into Babylon, and part of his ministry was fulfilled while a captive in Babylon. It is not to be wondered at that his prophecy is so full of lamentation and woe, seeing that he lived in a dark and discouraging period of Judah's history and the only light he had was when he could, by faith, look ahead through future ages to the glory of Christ and the restoration of Israel; not simply to a partial restoration such as when part of Judah came back from Babylon to Jerusalem under Cyrus' favorable decree, but a much fuller and more glorious and more permanent restoration of Israel in future times. "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" Yes, there is; but that was not the time for it to be manifest. There was no such thing as healing Judah's hurt at that time. Jeremiah himself was hurt by the hurt of his people. Their Woe was his woe, their troubles were his also. It grieved him terribly to see Judah forsaken, her enemies treading her down, the Lord himself silent and interposing no power in her behalf. More than all this, it grieved the prophet because he knew the sins of the people had brought these calamities upon them. They had not walked in the law of Moses as they had said they would do, therefore these curses had come upon them according to that law which they had not heeded. Jeremiah saw deeper than any of his time into the reason why these evils were upon the people, and knew that their sins were at the bottom and root of it all. All their woes were due to sin. The sins of the people lay like a stone on Jeremiah's heart, yet he could not make the people hear

him; they would not heed his advice, they would not, at his cry, turn from their evil ways. Thus, repentance being hid from their eyes, the Lord having included that nation in blindness and in unbelief, Jeremiah saw the dreadful calamity approaching every minute nearer. In his distress he cries, Is there no help for this? Must these things be so? “Is there no balm in Gilead?” Is there no healing that can he applied to these sores of infidelity which will heal my people from their backslidings? “Is there no physician there?” Is there no one who under- stands this deep-seated disease of sin among my people who can properly treat it and cure it, thus turning this people from their evil? To these cries from the prophet’s soul, there was no apparent help at the time. The heavens were brass, God’s throne was silent, no help from on high came. Events moved on to their inevitable conclusion, sin must get its wages, the law must claim its victim. Yet, down through the ages, dark as they were, his faith saw the light of Jesus, who is himself the great “Physician, whose will and aim it is to redeem his “Israel from all her transgressions and to perfectly heal his elect whom. he purchased back from death with his own blood. Every nation which had enslaved Judah and Israel was in turn to be themselves judged when the Lord should arise to scatter their enemies and to bring them back into their own land. The children of Abraham are heirs to the promise, the law which came after the promise cannot make void the promise which antedated the law by four hundred and thirty years. Thus, Paul tells us that all who are Christ’s are heirs of the promise made to Abraham, that not all are of Israel who are fleshly Israel, but all Christ’s elect are spiritual Israel: these are they whose right it is to the promise; the restoration promises throughout the Scriptures belong to these. These restoration promises in Christ are surely Gilead’s balm, and the great Physician himself, who knows our frame and remembers that we are dust, he it is who alone can apply these scriptural promises to our souls to

heal and comfort those whom sin has slain, but whom his blood has redeemed Gilead, the land of the sweet-smelling spices and savory things, the place of healing herb and of myrrh and frankincense, also the hill of witness. When the children of Israel came through Jordan into the promised land, they took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes, and made a heap in the riverbed. When the waters came together after Israel passed safely through, this heap was overwhelmed. But, also they took twelve stones up out of the bed of the river and made them an heap at the place where they lodged that night. Thus, two heaps: one in the bed of the river swept over by its Waters, the other in the land of Canaan a silent witness of the fact that the waters of the river had been turned back from before the ark of the covenant as they passed through. These are two heaps of Witness. The pile of stones in the bed of the river hidden by its waters witnesses of the judgments of the law overwhelming Christ, the Son of God, in death for his people; the pile of stones in the land of Canaan Witnesses of Israel's deliverance from judgment because Christ suffered those judgments for them. Gilead, the word, means heap of witness. From this Witness comes healing balm to the soul of God's Israel applied by the Spirit of the great Physician who has been tempted in all points his Israel, thus knows how to succor them in their trials and temptations. On the other hand, however, at the time Jeremiah asked these questions there was no manifestation of this balm, nor of any application of it to Israel's hurt by the great Physician. The soul of the prophet and the souls of the faithful with him at that time, could be comforted only as faith enabled them to look forward to the day of Christ and the promise of these things. The law could not bring salvation, nor was there in Israel any ability of their own to turn them from their evils unto the living' God. The fruitlessness of human endeavor to itself repent of its errors is proven in Israel's history. Nothing'

short of the supreme power of God in Christ can give repentance unto Israel. For this purpose Christ died and rose from the dead and afterward ascended on high, to give repentance unto Israel. Without this overcoming power of Christ there can be no repentance. Christ is the repentance of his Israel. Repentance is not lamenting one's sins, but turning from them utterly. No sinner can turn himself from his own Way, this is the risen Christ's work. He alone turns his people from sin to holiness, from the thralldom of dead works to the gracious service of the living God. This repentance or turning away from all the works of the law, from all judgment and condemnation, is the "balm of Gilead." It is the remedy that heals our hurts because it goes directly to the root of the trouble, not treating symptoms merely, but eradicating the cause. This balm of the "hill of Witness" regenerates, not reforms, the sinner so that he becomes a new man in Christ, old things pass away and all things become new. No one can apply this Sovereign remedy but the great Physician. This exalted Redeemer at the right hand of God sent the Holy Ghost, or Comforter. This Comforter takes of the things of Jesus and reveals them unto Israel, and when he does there is a certain and sure cure administered, an effectual turning away from the World, the flesh and the devil, and a turning unto the living God. How glad and thankful we ought to be that we are no more under the law, no more under. its threats and thunders, but are under the gracious dispensation of his living Word wherein we have continual access to the efficacy of Gilead's balm and the ministry of the great Physician. We cannot be thankful enough that the dark dispensation of his Wrath has passed and that the glad New Year of his grace and mercy envelops us.

This is written at the request of brother C. H. Byrd, of Enterprise, Alabama, who writes me, "A few mornings ago I awakened with the twenty-second verse of the eighth

chapter of Jeremiah on my mind. It had been quite a long time since I had read this Scripture before. It continually dwells on my mind. If the Lord would lead you out, I would be glad to have you Write on the subject."

H. H. L.

Elder Horace H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Volume 99, No. 2
February 1931

JEREMIAH XVIII. 1-4.

"The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to tho potter to make it."

This is the word of the Lord. Coming through the prophet makes it not a whit less the word of God. At sundry times and in divers manners God, in time past, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, but the word thus spoken was of God none the less, even though it fell from the lips of fallible men. Worms of the dust were called and ordained of God to prophesy in his name, and their limitations as men, and sinful men at that, in no way affected the infallible inspiration that gripped them. God's using at sinful man lo convey his message to sinful men in no way detracts from the authority and truth of the word. God in such cases accompanies the word with such spiritual demonstration and conviction to the hearts intended for it that they cannot gainsay it nor refute the ordination of the One by whom it is sent. Herein is a

man’s ministry proved, in that his message (gift) makes room for itself in hearts themselves gifted with insight and un derstanding. One’s feelings regarding his own ministry can never be the final test by which to judge the nature and usefulness of that ministry. It is quite certain that had Jeremiah gone according to his own feelings and judgment he never would have been a prophet. He tried to prevail upon the Lord to let him off, but found that when God sets his hand to a thing there is no turning back. If one is called to preach or prophesy he will be given a message to deliver, and, his delivery of that message is proof of his calling, regardless of: what his own thought in the matter may be. Jeremiah’s ministry made him exceedingly unpopular with the people, for what he said was anything but smooth to the ears it fell upon. Jeremiah was in Judah, and the tribe of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were his auditors, though the whole nation of Israel was involved in his predictions. Jeremiah preached prior to the Babylonian captivity. After Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive “all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour,” leaving none, “save the poorest sort of the people of the land,” Jeremiah was left behind in Jerusalem with these “poorest sort,” this “remnant,” another proof that God in his people’s extremity, leaves “not himself without witness.” The sign of the potter’s house was given of the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah to Judah and Israel before the transpiring of the Babylonian captivity. Its primary signification is to that event and to the restoration following after seventy years in Babylon. The Almighty emphasizes his right in this eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah to do with his people and with the nations of the earth as it pleases him ; to make and to mar, to renew and to spoil, to cast down and to raise up, to kill and to make alive. They are as clay in the hand of the potter, and he their Potter. The command of the Lord to Jeremiah involved three things: “arise,” “go,” “hear.” Some

people think if a man is called to preach he can preach any time or all the time, just whenever he is of a mind to make an appointment or when others make an appointment for him. Our appointments amount to nothing except "if the Lord will." Although a servant of God may have preached live hundred sermons, yet for his live hundred first he will need quickening ("arise"), sending ("go"), understanding ("hear "), the same as for the first sermon he ever preached. Preaching is one thing in which man never becomes expert, self-sufficient. He is no more able to "eat of the sinew which shrank" at the last than at the first. So Jeremiah, though a prophet for many years, and though he had already delivered many messages to this national people, still for this particular message, as well as for each previous one, as well as for each subsequent one, he needed to be stirred with spiritual life, to he told, "Arise." The very power and spirit of the arising of the Lord, the power of the resurrection, is in the preaching of the gospel. If it is the gospel preached Jesus is in it, and Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." When one is called to preach, is hidden "arise," he is not left to seek his own work, to how out his own path, to go as he lists, but is directed ("go") not promiscuously, but to a definite place. In this instance, with Jeremiah, it was "the potter's house." In what is said above we do not mean to be understood as saying; that Jeremiah was a gospel preacher. His standing was legal, his position under the law, but certainly the gospel was veiled in his predictions. The fullness of his utterances looked forward to the "regeneration," the dispensation of the gospel. Not only, then, must the servant of God be called, qualified and sent by the Spirit of the Lord, but for each message he brings must be made to "hear," to understand He cannot store up the hearings, the understandings, of the past to do him for to-day. This lesson of the potter's house must, in its own order and time, be given the prophet. It was the very thing needed by that

people then, not sooner nor later. Thus the prophet could not have had it sooner nor later. He might perhaps have talked about it upon occasions afterward, but never again did he tell the thing itself as he told it then. We may talk about sermons we have preached, or tried to, but no servant of God ever succeeded in preaching the same sermon twice. Recalling the words of a sermon is not preaching it over. There is a power in every true gospel sermon that evades all recollection. So the Lord told Jeremiah "arise," "go," "hear," and he "went" and "beheld." The potter's house: one of several in that eastern country where the potters engaged in their work, the making of vessels out of clay. The clay, when dug, was trodden by men's feet, so as to form a paste (Isaiah xli. 25), then placed by the potter on the wheel beside which he sat, and shaped by him with his hands; after this it was smoothed, coated with a glaze, and burnt in a furnace. In this sign of the potter's house the only part of manufacture called attention to is the making of the vessel on the wheels, therefore that is the only feature of the work of pottery that will engage us in this article. These potters' houses in those days very likely were the scene of many marrings and spoilings, as well as of many finished productions of art and beauty. Doubtless many broken shreds lay scattered around, as well as many completed Vessels, of honor and dishonor, in finished array Jeremiah beheld the potter making a vessel on his wheels, and the vessel he wrought was marred in the hand of the potter as Jeremiah watched. He further beheld that the potter took. this same marred clay (not other clay) and made it again another vessel, a satisfactory one. After seeing all this Jeremiah heard God's declaration that he (God) had a perfect right to do with Judah and with Israel and with the nations as it pleased him; to do with mortals as this potter had done with clay. After all, what is man in the hand of the Almighty but clay in the hand of the potter? "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump

to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Dare man reply against God, or summon him to appear before the bar of human reason? "Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" God Almighty is the great Better, and we but the clay in his hands. This material world, the universe and all it contains, is the house of the great Potter, and the cycle of the centuries, the succession of ages, the march of dispensations, are the wheels upon which are being wrought a wonderful work: the salvation of the elect and the declaration of tho Potter's glory and honor and power. In this work there is a marring and at making again, both taking place "in," not out, of the potter's hand. The vessel did not slip or fall out of the potter's hand and then mar, but spoiled while in the hand of the potter. The clay was just as much in the potter's hand when it marred as it was afterward when renewed to his liking. This all primarily applies, as the context reads, to Judah and Israel, God's national people legally. Israel had been chosen of the Lord from among all the nations of the earth, while still in the loins of Abraham. To Abraham, by promise, was given Isaac whom he (Abraham) received as from the dead, not according to nature, but contrary thereto, from the deadness of Sarah's womb. To Isaac was born Jacob; to Jacob, the twelve patriarchs; to the twelve patriarchs, the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel, God brought-out of Egypt, and led them about by the hand of Moses forty years through the wilderness. Moses dead upon Mt. Nebo, Joshua was placed at their head and led them through Jordan to the promised land of Canaan. Here the Lord went before then; in battle, subdued their enemies and eventually gave them rest and peace. Naturally one would think Israel would endeavor to make some adequate return unto the Lord for all his goodness and kindness toward them, but they did not; instead they went-a-whoring after sensual things and devilish, after the ways and gods of the Gentiles. This first.

vessel, national Israel, marred in the making. It brought forth "wild grapes," the fruit of the flesh, not of the Spirit. The history of national Israel proved the failure of the flesh to attain godliness, its inability to live at all right in the sight of God, or to serve him acceptably. It was demonstrated that God could not he reached nor his favor procured through the deeds of the law, through burnt offerings, ceremonies, forms, feasts nor fasts. But, bear in mind, this failure, this marring of the first vessel, national Israel, was no accident, no mere happen-so. It all transpired with the vessel still in the hand of the Potter. In all of it God's purpose and design were being accomplished. The utter failure of Adam must in all its enormity be revealed before the success of Christ can be at all appreciated. After the depravity and wretchedness of the natural man are fully displayed in the elect nation of the old covenant, the Jews, in the new covenant, the gospel, is brought to light a people fashioned after God's own heart, a spiritual people, who, out of' the fullness of the Godhead in Christ Jesus, receive grace for grace. They realize very well that God cannot be served in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit. Therefore in this gracious dispensation of this gospel day is given them grace that they serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear. God is a Spirit, and has begotten unto himself a spiritual people, who wore ship him in spirit and in truth. This new vessel pleases the Potter. It is so because Christ is in them, and Christ is the only man that ever did please God as a man. But this new vessel is fashioned out of the same clay that was marred in the first instance. It is the sinner that is saved, not some ethereal part of him, and it is the redeemed sinner that, by grace, serves God acceptably' in Christ Jesus. "Except a man be horn again," Jesus said. The vessel marred in the first instance is fashioned again an acceptable vessel, and both the marring; and the acceptability are in His hands; both accomplished his purpose and predestined plan. Adam, the

first man, was formed of dust, a vessel of clay. He fell in transgression. It was not accident that he did so. “Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the worlds” Adam was one of God’s Works, so God must have known all about him when he made him. Nothing that Adam subsequently did but was known unto God beforehand. Therefore Adam’s transgression, his sin, death, ruin, and that of all his posterity, was in the hand of the Potter; all comprehended in the infinite plan, purpose, knowledge and wisdom of Almighty God, and this same vessel marred in the first instance, was made again another vessel, and in it there was no failure. In Christ there is no failure, he pleases the Potter in an he does and says. This second vessel was formed in the womb of the virgin, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him. “And We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth.” Every one of the elect is first in Aden], then in Christ; first marred, then made “accepted in the beloved;” first lost, then saved; first a. sinner, then a saint. One part of their lives is as much in the hand of the Potter as any other. They are sown in corruption (Adam), raised in incorruption (Christ); sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also hear the image of the heavenly.”

Written at the request of sister M R. Lewshe of Trenton, N. J.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 22
November 15, 1914

JOHN VI. 70; XIII. 27.

BROTHER A. L. Holden, of Durham, N. C., writes us as follows: "Will you please give your views in answer to a question suggested from the following Scripture, to wit: 'Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' – John vi. 70; also, 'And after the sop, Satan entered into him.' – John xiii. 27? The words 'Satan' and 'devil' in the Scriptures appear as synonymous. If so, there also appears a dormant principle in the creature, devil, that the entrance of Satan brought to light; hence, the question: What principle dormant in the one was brought to light upon the entrance of the other?"

While we do not believe in splitting hairs, or laying stress on fine distinctions that amount to nothing, we scarcely think the words "devil" and "Satan " in the above two passages noted by brother Holden are fully synonymous; it seems to us there is a shade of difference worth our while to note. It is true that in many places where these two words occur they do mean one and the same thing, but not here. In those Scriptures where the word "devil" is preceded by the definite article "the" it means the same as Satan. Where the word "devil" is preceded by "a" it does not denote as full a measure of wickedness as would be involved in the expression, "the devil," which would embrace the whole of Satan and all his arts. Had Jesus told Judas that he was " the devil," we should have been compelled to believe that he was no less than Satan himself. But, by his saying that he was "a devil," we know that Judas instead of being the entire embodiment of evil, was but one of many that falsely accuse the truth. The word "devil" is *diabolo* in the Greek, and literally means an accuser, an opposer. All men by nature are in opposition to righteousness, thus are opposers; hence, diabolical, therefore devilish. Every man in a state of nature is a devil, but every man is not "the devil." It would take the

whole of that portion of the world that is unregenerate and out of Christ to make up the sum and substance of the devil. In 1 John v. 19, “the whole world lieth in wickedness,” and the marginal reading is, “The whole world lieth in the wicked one.”

But the particular question of brother Holden is, What principle dormant in Judas, a devil, was brought to light upon the entrance of Satan after the giving of the sop to him by Jesus’? This principle was money lust, the greed for gold. It has wrecked many a life and marred many a fair profession of faith in Christ. “The love of money is the root of all evil.” Money is all right in its place; it is the love of it that does the damage. Sadly has the fine gold of a believer’s walk and conversation ofttimes been dimmed and sullied by this diabolical love of money simply for money’s sake. Mixed with this excitement of his passion for gold, which had since his becoming a disciple lain dormant in Judas, but now, by the entrance of Satan into him, was roused into activity, we doubt not there was mixed jealousy. This must have been so, because Jesus openly exposed his traitor in the presence of all his disciples, and, no doubt, it fired Judas with a determination to get back at him, to be revenged for having been openly exposed, and, as some men might say, insulted. Jealousy, greed, revenge, what a mixture is here, a very devil surely. These devils, or evil spirits, adversaries of our peace, diabolical as they are, are in the flesh of us all. Grace, and grace alone, can keep these in subjection. The new man of the Spirit, created in righteousness and true holiness, alone is able to keep the body in subjection. Not one of us have anything to boast of over Judas, therefore let us put our hands over our mouths and leave him to his God. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 20
October 14, 1914

JOHN VIII. 32.

"AND ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

From the very first that spiritual aspirations found a place in the soul of man there has been a longing for freedom: the freedom of the soul from the thraldom of unbelief and sin. History shows over and over again how the various races of men enslaved by their stronger fellows have struggled strenuously to be free, counting liberty as more to be desired than life itself. Even so have the souls of children of God throughout all ages prayed earnestly for that freedom which truth alone can give, that liberty which lifts all burdens and brings the believer out into the day of the triumphant Son of God. In the verses preceding and following the words under consideration we find that those to whom Jesus was speaking did not all believe what he said: some did, others did not. None could believe Jesus then, none can believe him now, but those who have the witness of the Spirit within themselves. To some who heard him this witness was given, therefore they believed; to others it was not given, therefore they believed not. Belief, in order to be genuine, must be based on solidity, and that which affords the rock-bed foundation of belief is faith, and faith is a gift of God, the fruit of the Spirit. It takes the same power to bring about belief in the soul as it took to bring the body of Jesus out of the sepulchre. This same mighty power working in the children of God causes them to believe that Jesus is the Christ. That his people should know the truth, Jesus definitely promised. There were no doubts about this fact then, there are none

now. The children of God “shall” know the truth. It is not that they “may” know it, it is not that their knowing it hinges upon any contingency which they themselves must bring about, but they “shall” know the truth. Jesus speaks with positiveness and with authority. To him was given power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. Thus, their knowing the truth depends not on the will of man, not on any conditions which the soul must fall in with in order to know the truth, but the certainty that the children of God shall know the truth, but the certainty that the children of God shall know the truth is of God entirely, his absolute sovereignty and eternal purpose bring about the performance of the promise made in and by Jesus Christ that all his children shall know the truth. They shall not be taught it of men, it shall not be handed down from one to another, nor from generation to generation, but all his elect shall know the truth from the least of them unto the greatest, for all shall be taught it of God. From this point which all God's people agree upon, we pass on to consider how and in what way the knowledge of the truth brings about freedom. First, what is truth? Pilate asked this question, and we may well ask it, too. Jesus himself answers this question in saying, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” Therefore Christ Jesus is himself the truth. Whatsoever agrees not with him and in him is not truth, and must necessarily be false. If truth makes free, then Christ Jesus makes free, for Christ is truth and truth is Christ. We who are to-day living by the faith of the Son of God in this present day of grace and of the gospel dispensation can scarcely realize the capacity in which our spiritual forefathers were under the law in that age of Moses and of sin and death which was before the coming of Christ. All who walked by faith in that age from the time of Abel down to old Simeon were spirits in prison. Notwithstanding that the believed in God and looked for the coming of God's Lamb who should

bear their sins away and purge them in his own blood, yet all of them died in faith, not receiving the fulfillment of the promise as we who live in this age have received it. The Holy Spirit in them moved them to testify beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory which should follow, but as to what or what manner of time the Spirit within them did signify none of them knew; and although they earnestly sought to know the meaning of the Spirit's work within them, yet to none of them was it ever revealed. The book was sealed up until the time of the end and none was found able to loose those seals and open the book until the Lion of the tribe of Judah came. Herein, therefore, was bondage, real soul captivity. That is why we call them "spirits in prison." The church throughout all that period of time before Christ was a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. The coming of truth, Jesus, made an end of this captivity. The law of God found its fulfillment in Jesus, sin found its destruction; in him condemnation was done away. The doing away of these things brought freedom to the children of God. No more were they under law, but under grace; no more under obligation to offer sacrifices, or to rituals and ceremonies, or to keep feasts and holy days, for now was come the revelation of the truth in Jesus Christ whereby the children of God were liberated from the narrow structures of legalism and brought out into the infinite reality of the gospel wherein God is served and worshipped in Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. Far better is it it know that we are living in one never ending Sabbath which Jesus has made and kept for us, and is making and keeping within each of us, than to feel that the sabbath is but one day in the week in which we must do no work or be condemned. Far better than bringing our turtle-doves and pigeons and lambs and kids to some carnal priest for an effectual atonement, is it to know that we have an eternal High Priest entered within the heavens who has made by himself one effectual offering for our sins which insures

our never perishing. The things which Truth teaches us are so wonderful and life-giving that when we know them there is sure and abundant liberty from all the ineffectual works of the law which superstitiously were supposed to give life, but which really never did. The Jews commonly thought that they had eternal life in observing the Scriptures, but Jesus said they had not, that the law and the prophets testified of him. It was a false tradition or superstition that by doing the things contained in the law they might reap eternal life, and many among men even to-day are still superstitious about this very matter, still ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness. But superstitious is not confined to any one race or condition of men, for Paul told the Greeks at Athens that he perceived in all things they were too superstitious. The Athenians had erected magnificent edifices as dwellings of the gods, but Paul told them that the true and living God whom he worshipped did not dwell in temples made with hands, nor was he worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything. The truth in Jesus Christ had been shown to Paul and so his soul was free from any such error as that God needs our weak ministrations, or that he is in any sense dependent upon the efforts of poor puny man, or upon any of his creatures.

Whoever commits sin, Jesus said, is the servant of sin. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, therefore is the Lord's free man. The child of God cannot offend against any law which has no jurisdiction over him. We were some time the servant of sin, because we were under the law of sin, but having been delivered through Jesus Christ from under the law of sin and condemnation this law is no longer over the redeemed of God, hence they cannot transgress it any more. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made believers free from the law of sin and death. Since the work of Jesus Christ cannot by us be undone, we cannot

therefore commit sin as once we did, cannot longer live in it as our natural element, and have been made free from its condemnation, which is the wages of sin. This freedom from the service of sin is accomplished in the children of God through their being taught the truth. The entrance of the Word gives light, darkness is abolished, slavery ended, the captive freed. Truth makes an end of slavish fear. The fear of death, the dread of torment, horror of the consequences of sin; all these things enslave the soul. Naught but the truth in its purity can abolish such slavery as this. The thing we dread is the thing which enslaves us. To the extent we are afraid of anything, to that extent we are in bondage to that thing. Most of such fears arise from the fact that we are ignorant of the thing we are afraid of. Ignorance breeds terror. When, however, the revealing light of truth is turned upon the thing we fear, we then come to know that thing for what it really is and it no longer has power to terrify us. To the condemned sinner, conscience-stricken because of his sins, what horrors lurk in death and hell. Burdened with his load of guilt, he knows he is not fit to live nor yet fit to die; to his tortured soul his life from day to day is filled with anguish, his nights are woeful. When, however, the Sun of righteousness arises upon his sin-stricken soul with everlasting healing, then are the shades of night with all its terrors suddenly withdrawn and the soul is freed from fears and from annoying doubts. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ accomplishes in the soul that wonderful freedom which death nor hell nor sin can evermore destroy.

The truth of God is infinite even as God himself is infinite, and just as “finis” can never be written to any of the attributes of Deity, just so there is no end to truth. It is promised us that we shall know the truth, not the slightest uncertainty about that, the freedom which knowing the truth brings is our precious inheritance in Christ; but there is no end to it. The soul grows and keeps on growing in the

knowledge of truth and of grace. We can never come to the place where we can say, This is the end of truth. It is like a river, ever flowing; never stopping or staying. We cannot set bounds to it nor confine it with narrow limits. To no one of us, nor to any one age or period of time, is the truth all revealed. Not for nothing do the Scriptures repeatedly speak of godly things being like rivers, or like flowing streams. Like rivers, these things of God are not static, but ever going on and on to infinity. There is a river, so says the prophet, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. This living and continual stream of eternal truth has gladdened the hearts of believers throughout all ages and has brought them that freedom from sin and from death, from snares and delusions, from all false traditions and doctrines of men. What need we care what the world believes so long as we have that secret which is given to all them who fear the Lord? Though the world is torn and rent with strife, though men search and delve for fame and honor, wealth and glory, why need these things worry us? Having meat to eat the world knows not of, let us possess our souls in peace. If the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing, let them do so and welcome. God in his rich and sovereign grace has brought us into his pavilion where safely he makes us abide. Under the covert of his wings, we are come to truth. They that trust in the Lord Jehovah are like Mt. Zion, they shall not be moved. What a wonderful blessing indeed is to have in our souls that steadying power of revealed truth whereby our souls remain ever true to the course marked out by the compass of divine faith, not drifting hither and yon at the beck and call of every varying wind of human doctrine, of vain philosophy and of science falsely so-called. Knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus lifts the soul up into a kind of aristocracy of the Spirit; or like an airship flying high aloft, carries us above the earth-deflected currents of the lower atmosphere, into the calm serenity of the vastness of eternal space. - L.

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 93, No. 10 – October, 1925

JOHN X. 16.

"OTHER sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

The elect of God, those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinated unto the adoption of children, are to be found in every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue under heaven. The Jews thought that no nation would derive any benefit from the coming of the Messiah but they themselves. They thought no others but themselves were the children Of Abraham, and therefore none but themselves were heirs of the promise made to Abraham. For this reason they called Abraham their father, and were very proud of their ability to trace their lineage by flesh and blood from Abraham. However, Jesus told them that flesh and blood should not inherit the kingdom of heaven, meaning that their ability to trace themselves in the flesh as descendants of Abraham would give them no right to the kingdom of God on that basis. In the words of the Scripture quoted above Jesus tells the Jews: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." He means that he has sheep among the Gentile nations outside the bounds of Jewry, which sheep were just as much given him of the Father before the world began as were his sheep among the Jews. These, also, he must bring. During the lifetime of Jesus here in the flesh he commanded the disciples to preach to Jews only, they were forbidden to go to the Gentiles; but after Jesus rose from the dead he told his disciples, All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me. Go ye therefore into

all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature. By his death Jesus took away the handwriting of ordinances which was against the Gentiles, being contrary to them, and nailed them to his cross. Thus the wall of partition being abolished by the death and resurrection of Christ from between Jew and Gentile he makes of the twain (Jew and Gentile) one new man. Thus there is one fold and one shepherd. This is what was shown to Peter while he was upon the housetop when the sheet was let down knit at the four corners and containing all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. This vision showed him he, though a Jew, was not to despise anything that the Lord had cleansed, even though it be a dog of a Gentile. This prepared him to go to the house of the Gentile Cornelius, and when he saw the work that God had wrought in the house of Cornelius, Peter exclaimed, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons," that he has a people among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews. Those who came with Peter to the house of Cornelius, being Jews also, were astonished to see that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. Therefore when Jesus said, "Other sheep I have," he meant that he had people among the Gentiles; that is, among the nations outside of the Jews; that these were as much given him to redeem as were his elect among the Jews; that when he should redeem them there would no longer be any difference between Jews and Gentiles in the Spirit, but all would be one flock, or one fold, and Jesus would be the one Shepherd of them all. We here in America to-day are Gentiles, and belong to that "other sheep" which Jesus said he must also bring.

Requested by brother S. S. Miller, of Julian, Cal. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 19.
October 1, 1916

JOHN XIII. 36.

"SIMON Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards?"

There is a vast difference between the understanding of truth possessed by people of God before the resurrection of Christ from the dead and that which they have had since his resurrection. During all the time that preceded the resurrection of Christ, from the days of Adam to the end of the legal dispensation, even though holy men spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, yet none of them had full and complete understanding of the things they said and recorded. It is much like the case of the blind man whose eyes Jesus anointed, and asked him if he saw, and the man replied, I see men as trees walking. This man, after the first anointing which he received, had his sight, but not clearly. He could not discriminate; trees looked like men and men like trees. His vision was not clear, nor did he possess the gift of adequate discernment. Again Jesus anointed his eyes, and asked him if he saw, and he then said, I see clearly. The second anointing gave him perfect vision. There is this great difference in the understanding which the disciples had prior to the descent of the Holy Spirit at the time of Pentecost, and that which came unto them as the result of the coming of the Holy Spirit at that time. During the lifetime of Jesus here on earth those with him had received the first anointing, but not the second; the second anointing came, as we have said, at the coming of the Holy Ghost as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts. By this

second anointing Peter was able to preach the gospel and to interpret the prophecies and the Psalms of David, something that no man up to that time (excepting Jesus) had ever been able to do. We are told in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of John that Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world. While Jesus knew that he was born to die, and that without death and the shedding of his blood there could never be any remission of the sins of his people, yet the disciples, though they loved Jesus and believed sincerely in him, could not understand the necessity of his death, and did not comprehend how that the whole of the law and all the prophets showed forth beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Jesus showed unto his disciples that he must go unto Jerusalem, suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, be killed, and raised again the third day. This the disciples never understood until the Holy Ghost came and took of the things which Jesus had said and revealed unto them their true meaning. Peter even rebuked the Savior for thus declaring beforehand his sufferings and death. We suppose Peter thought the idea of suffering and death to be inconsistent with his belief in the perfection of Jesus. At any rate, whatever was the idea in Peter's mind that caused him thus to rebuke Jesus, the Savior rebuked him, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Three verses ahead of our text Jesus had said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." He meant that none but he, and he alone, could tread the wine-press of the wrath of God, none but he could pay the great price of their redemption, none but he could drink of the cup that he was to drink to the very dregs. All the judgments of God against the sins of the elect were to be visited upon Jesus because he was the eternal Security and covenant Head of the church of God. He, who knew no sin, therefore

was made sin for his people in order to make them the righteousness of God in himself. It was not possible for any of his people to go with him in that journey down into, and through, and up from, death: the wages of sin which Christ had to pay for his people's salvation. None could ever be able to suffer what Jesus did and live through it or come out of it alive. He had power to lay down his life and to take it again. This does not at all contradict the doctrine of the eternal vital unity of Christ and the church. As members of his body, in a mystical and spiritual sense, they were in him when he died, and in him when he arose from the dead. But what is meant in the thirteenth chapter of John is that as men and women, and as individuals, not one, nor all, of the Lord's people could ever be able, nor shall they ever be required, to die the death he died, nor to suffer the extremes of agony endured by him.

Evidently Peter, nor any of the rest, understood what journey Jesus meant when he told them he was going away from them. Possibly Peter thought the Savior was simply going into some other town or country, and Peter saw no reason why he could not accompany him. When Jesus told him, "Thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards" it was all Greek to Peter, for he understood not at all what Jesus meant. The disciples might follow him to the cross and witness his terrible death, but further they could not go at that time. However, they had the promise from Jesus that he would come again unto them and receive them unto himself, that so they should be together. This he verified afterward, after his rising from the dead. He appeared unto them, spoke to them, called them by name, showed them his wounded hands and side, opened to them the Scriptures, ate with them and finally was received up in a cloud out of their sight, having told them to wait in Jerusalem until power from on high should come upon them. He did come again unto them, then, receiving them up unto himself

where he was. When he had gone from them unto death he and they all were then under the condemnation of the law; when he came unto them after his resurrection he was free from condemnation and the sentence of death, and so were all his people. All that was needed was for them to be made aware of his victory, that they might come unto him in that liberty wherewith he had made them free. It was after Jesus' resurrection that he spoke to Peter and showed him how he was to follow him, commanding him to feed the sheep and lambs of God. Peter's following Jesus had been interrupted by the death of Jesus, into which Peter nor any one else could follow him. In John xxi. 18, Jesus shows Peter how his following is to be resumed, and to continue as long as Peter shall be on earth: "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Some think that Jesus meant here to show Peter that he was eventually to be crucified and to meet his death in that way. We do not think so, but Jesus showed him what kind of death it was to be through which Peter was to glorify God, not a physical crucifixion, but that Peter was to find his work in the vineyard of the Lord to be such that he would continually be going where his own natural inclinations would never lead him, that his work in the ministry was to be opposed to the human nature of him. Therefore Peter was to be crucified for Christ's sake, not so much actually as spiritually and experimentally. The apostle Paul knew something about being crucified with Christ, and so did Peter, and so does, we believe, every God-called servant in the vineyard of Christ. In other words, the Spirit of Christ was to take Peter and bind him and carry him wheresoever it listed, without any say-so of Peter whatsoever.

In Revelation viii. 1, it says, "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." We understand this half-

hour of silence in the church to mean the period elapsing between the last breath of Jesus upon the cross and his coming forth from the tomb very early in the morning of the first day of the week. This was a time of complete silence, in that, so far as we have any record in the Bible, there was not a single spiritual emotion in the heart of any single soul. The hearts of the women were stirred to go down to the tomb, and this emotion in them was coincident with Jesus' rising from the dead. Not until he had arisen had they had any such inclination. Of course the women themselves did not know that their wanting to go to him was the effect of his resurrection power already manifest in them. But every spiritual feeling or thought is based upon Jesus' resurrection. There could be not a spark of spiritual vitality in any soul had Jesus not arisen. Thus the death of Jesus eclipsed all spirituality in his people; his resurrection revived them. The truth will never be eclipsed again as long as time lasts. We may get terribly discouraged at times; if we do not, others may, but total darkness, amounting to utter despair, shall never overtake the church as long as God is on the throne.

Written by request. L.

Elder H.H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 19
October 1, 1919

JOHN XIV. 6, 18, 19.

MISS Nettie Cooper, of Mansfield, Ga, requests us to write on the sixth, eighteenth and nineteenth verses of the fourteenth chapter of John. Any one of these verses involves matter enough to occupy us for the length of a long article, but we forbear out of consideration for the patience of our readers,

and will try to present simply a few thoughts along the line of each of the passages asked for. John xiv. 6, reads: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Jesus is here particularly addressing Thomas. In the fourth verse Jesus had told the disciples: “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know,” but Thomas had replied, saying that they did not know where he was going, nor did they know the way. To this Jesus insisted that the way, the truth and the life were none other than he, Jesus, himself, so that if Thomas knew Jesus he must be acquainted with the way. There is such a thing as the children of God knowing things and not knowing that they know them. Thomas knew the way, but was not aware that he knew it. One may have an experience of grace and not know that he has it. Not until the Preacher, Jesus, opens up the spiritual understanding, do the subjects of grace know where they stand. This is the function of preaching: to tell God’s people the things they know, but do not know that they know; not to tell them that which they do not know. When Jesus spoke of his going from them, and of the way of that going, Thomas thought he must mean something altogether different from anything he knew about, but Jesus assured him he was speaking no new thing, that even this Thomas knew, though he was not aware of it. We are so apt to think that the doctrine and Jesus are distinct and separate things; that the experience and Jesus are distinct; that hope and Jesus are distinct; that faith and Jesus are distinct; and so on. The doctrine is Jesus. Abstruse dogmas and articles of a creed are not doctrine. The experience is the life of Christ manifested in the mortal flesh of his people. Christ is the hope of glory. Our imagination runs away with us at times, and we picture Jesus as away off in space, somewhere in a place called heaven, and his people as down here on earth. Christ and his people cannot be separated in any such fashion. Where the one is, there is the

other. “Know ye not that the kingdom of heaven is within you?” So Thomas thought the way and Jesus must be two different things; so Mary thought the resurrection and Jesus were distinct and separate; but Jesus told Thomas, “I am the way,” and to Mary he said, “I am the resurrection.” “The way,” not a way. The word “the” shows that the way, the truth and the life, are definite things, that there are not several of them, not more than one, but just one way, one truth, one life. These things cannot be twisted and wrenched about to suit the whims of mortals, they will not be accommodated to the “say sos” and “think sos “ of men, but those whom God chooses out of the world are, through grace, reconciled to this one way, one truth, one life: Jesus. Often one hears worldly professors say it does not make any difference what church one belongs to, as they are all aiming for the same place anyway. There is no “anyway” to get to heaven ; there is just one way, the way of the cross of Christ, through his death, his resurrection and his merits alone. Furthermore, no one yet ever attained the presence of God by aiming for it. “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” Never by works of their own can mortals enter heaven. The headstone shall be brought forth with shootings of, “Grace, grace unto it.” The highway of holiness, the way of salvation, Jesus, no fowl knoweth, the vulture’s eye sees it not, the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor fierce lion passed by it. The vulture is a carrion-bird, he feeds on dead things, has no appetite nor craving for living things. His eye, while said to be the keenest of all birds, is ever on the watch for death. No wonder the vulture never sees Jesus, the way of salvation, for he is the living way; there is no death, no separation from God, in him. The natural man is a vulture. He feeds on death, and is himself dead in sin. The natural man cannot discover the way into the presence of God. Neither the whelp of the lion nor the lion himself comes into this way. No matter how

strong a man may he, no matter how resolute and determined, he cannot storm the heights of heaven and take them by main force. " Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." One thing let there be everlastingly fixed in us the conviction that Jesus is the truth, and there is absolutely no truth apart from him. Not in philosophy, not in logic, not in science, only in Jesus is the living, eternal truth. He came into the world to bear witness of the truth, and his testimony is faithful and true. All that disputes him is a lie. In coming into the flesh to bear the burden of his people's guilt, he showed in his deeds that man was everlastingly unable to save himself". The dreadful load of their guilt which he bore was testimony to the truth of their entire depravity and corruption; their guilt deserved death and he must pay the penalty. The shedding of his blood, his death and resurrection, brought salvation and justification to light. Any one who denies these things, the total depravity of man and the sole efficacy of Christ's work, let him be angel, human or devil, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. And, also, He is the life. There in him only is the never-ending, undying life, the eternal life. Immortality is in him. We have said before, and we say it again, that there is not a spark of anything in man by nature that can outlast death, that can endure forever. Man is mortal, every bit of him. Only in Jesus is the life eternal, the life that death cannot interrupt, nor even touch. This Jesus is the very life of the church. it is he insures her immortality and eternal blessedness. We could quote any number of passages to prove that Christ is the way, the truth, the life, but to do so would lengthen out this article intolerably. If interested, the time of our readers could not be more profitably spent than in hunting out these Scriptures for themselves. "No man," he says, "cometh unto the Father, hut by me." Could anything be more plain"? is there any Scripture that less needs exposition to the spiritually-minded? No words of ours could

make this statement of Jesus more plain than it is as he says it. Notice, please, he says, "Cometh unto the Father," not cometh unto God. No sinner of Adam's race can come into relationship with God as son unto a father, except by Jesus Christ. All the elect are predestinated unto the adoption of children unto God, and that adoption comes but one way, and that by Jesus Christ. No man is ever a child or a son of God, and God is the Father of no man, except by and through Jesus Christ; Through Christ, the only begotten Son of God, comes into the hearts of the elect the Spirit of adoption or sonship, and when it does thus come, they say, "Abba, Father." Thus is power given them to become the sons of God. The way into the Fatherhood of God, therefore, is through Jesus.

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." This is the only place in the Bible where the word, "comfortless," occurs. The word in the Greek is *orphanos*, and means "orphans." To be an orphan is to be without one or both parents, parent-less, bereaved. Jesus says, therefore, I will not leave you as orphans, without father or mother, bereaved, and immediately follows this with: "I will come to you." His coming to them is to cancel their bereavement, is to end their parent-less condition. David says, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." When every earthly prop is gone, the spider's web of creature works, an ineffectual covering, the refuge of lies swept away, all confidence in an arm of flesh destroyed, then the appearing of Jesus as the messenger of the new covenant in his blood ends the bereavement of the convicted sinner and makes good the promise: "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation." During the three days that Jesus lay in the tomb the disciples were truly orphaned, the church was widowed. By the death of Christ she was free from the law, her former husband; but her new husband, Christ, had not yet arisen

from the dead and dis covered himself unto her. However, he promises not to leave his disciples in such a state of orphanage or widowhood, but will again come to them, and when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory. No more thence are they widows and orphans, but married unto him and take his name: "The Lord our righteousness," and by adoption are the children of God. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that We should bring forth fruit unto God." The appearing of Jesus, no matter when it comes or how, is all that is needed to satisfy every longing of the quickened soul. To realize the presence of Jesus here or hereafter, in this World or in the world to come, is to be in heaven. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire be side thee." Comfort to the full is in his appearing. "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are please tires for evermore."

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also." it was only as a. man among men that the world ever did behold him. His chosen ones saw him by faith as the incarnate Son of God, but to the world he did not so appear. His true personality was withheld from the gross perceptions of natural men, and it was only for a little while that the world knew him and saw him as one man among many, and when that "little while" was ended he departed, nevermore to come again as he came then. "The world seeth me no more." No more forever will Jesus come humiliated, bruised, persecuted, forsaken, the bearer of sins, as he name then. His coming the second time is without sin unto salvation, not a sacrifice for sin, not wearing the image of the transgressor, nor the badge of mortality. "But ye see me." Yes, the called and chosen of God do always behold, him, for to them is he revealed.

Their faith always embraces him. “When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” They shall see him, and seeing him, shall he like him. He appeared to them after his resurrection, and, bestowing upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost, received them up into the gospel heavens by the power of his resurrection, thus making them sharers in his victory over death, hell and sin. So did he fulfill his promise unto them: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may he also.” In his light they were given to see light. Spiritual understanding comes only by the operation of the power of his resurrection. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” This is the only guarantee whereby there can be life for any of the elect in the presence of God. This word cuts like a sword. It excludes everything of the flesh and of the natural man. Solely because Christ lives, and for no other reason, is there life for the church. The church can perish no less than the Godhead. The life of one is the life of the other. God himself must as soon cease to be as that one, even the feeblest of his fold, fall and die. Our welfare is not furthered by our goodness nor hindered by our wickedness. The eternal life of God is the perseverance of the saints and their final preservation unto glory. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 21
November 1, 1914

JOHN XV. 25.

“BUT this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”

Very frequently we find in the New Testament references to the Old Testament. Jesus came to fulfill all that the law and the prophets had foretold of him. The new dispensation of the gospel could not be manifested until all the old dispensation of the law, every jot and tittle of it, had been fulfilled. Here, in the words of our text, Jesus says that "their law," the Jewish or Mosaic law, declared that he, Jesus, should be hated without a cause by the Jews. In order that this declaration of "their law" should be fulfilled, as well as everything else in that law, it was necessary for Jesus to perform works among them that none other had ever done. His doing these works among them brought into evidence their hatred toward him, time Fulfilling the Scripture that had long before said that they should hate him. This Scripture thus fulfilled is to be found in Psalms xxxv. 19, and in Psalms lxix. 4. The former reads: "Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause." The latter reads: "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head." David, by inspiration, is writing in these Psalms of Jesus. Jesus, coming afterward, caused all to be done that had been foretold of him, This hatred of Jesus lay dormant in the Jewish nation and needed something to provoke it into evidence. This provocation was Jesus' doing the works which no other man did. He did these works purposely to bring out the fact that the Jewish world hated him. We might, perhaps, wonder why it was necessary for this hatred to come into exercise; but certainly the Jews never would have crucified Jesus had they not hated him, and had Jesus not been crucified there never would have been salvation for any of God's elect. The Jews were no different in their nature from all the rest of mankind. Every one by nature hates the truth of God as it is in Jesus. The reason of this is because human nature was so fashioned in the very beginning of man's existence in the world, in such a

way that it is impossible for human nature to be in love with God and godliness. The carnal mind is enmity against God. The things of God are not known by the natural man, neither can they be known by him, for spiritual things can be discerned only by the Spirit. Thus the works which Jesus did among the Jews in that day brought into exercise the hatred that l already existed against him among them. Should Jesus come back again on earth as a man as he was then and again do those works, men to-day would hate him as men did then. There is no change in human nature since those days, and this nature is just as corrupt and just as opposed to Jesus as it ever was. Jesus had done many wonderful works in that Jewish nation: he had raised the dead, healed divers diseases, opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, calmed tempests, fed multitudes, forgiven sins, preached his gospel to the poor. All these works had he done among them; they had seen these works; they had in consequence not believed him, but had hated both him and his Father. No matter how Wonderfully God may manifest his power in our environment, in the circumstances and conditions about us, this will never bring about saving belief in God. Not until God, by the operation of his Spirit within us, executes the work of our regeneration, will we believe in him unto the saving of our souls. They hated him without a cause, in that Jesus was holy, harmless and undefiled; there was no guile in him; not the shadow of a fault or of a flaw of any kind could be found in him. He was God's Lamb Without blemish. No reason in him why they should hate him. Neither could they give any reason why they did hate him. When finally they accused him before Pilate, not being able to bring any true or just charge against him, they swore to lies and thus perjured themselves in order to accomplish his death. All this had to be just as it was in order to bring about the death of Christ and the salvation of his people, and this hatred of Jesus by the Jews was just as much a part of God's

eternal purpose and plan as was anything else connected with Christ and his people. But predestination could not be given by the Jews as a cause why they hated him, for the Jews knew nothing about predestination, since they were blind to that as well as all other parts of God's counsel. Not knowing anything about it, it could not be a motive actuating them to hate him. Therefore, they hated him and knew not why they hated him. When finally asked to make their charges against Jesus, and to prove them, as we have said before, they resorted to lies to establish their case, showing they were all the time hating him without a cause, that is, without knowing why they hated him.

Requested by brother Walter Mordecai, of Vernon, Alabama. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 19.
October 1, 1916

JOHN XVII. 1-3.

"THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Sou also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom thou hast sent."

Remarkable it is, indeed, that intelligent men reading the Scriptures have continued to miscall the language in the sixth chapter of Matthew, from the ninth to the thirteenth verses, the Lord's prayer, when it is nothing of the sort. That language was addressed to the disciples by the Savior in the

mount when he had intentionally withdrawn himself from the multitude to give instruction to his chosen few, intended for their ears and hearts alone. The intelligence and wisdom of man never appear so absurdly foolish as when applied to the unraveling of the mysteries of inspiration which God has from the beginning purposely hidden from human powers of research; but the foolishness of human efforts in this direction is never realized except by those who, becoming as little children in entering the kingdom of heaven, are given the discernment of the Spirit. The seven teenth chapter of John records one of the true prayers of the Lord Jesus. It is the intimate communion of the holy Son with the divine Father, the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, and as such prevails with God, so that not the slightest remnant of a doubt can prevail in our minds but that everything asked of the Father by his Son in this, as well as in every other instance, will most surely come to pass if it has not already done so. Having; eaten of the last supper in company with his disciples in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus left the city, and crossing the brook Cedron, soon came, as had often been his wont, to the garden called Gethsemane. His twelve were with him, and, John says, entered the garden with him, but after entering the garden, it is apparent from the records of Matthew and Mark that they proceeded not far before Jesus commanded nine of them to tarry, sitting while he went beyond them in company with Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John. Finally he came to a point where even these three could not farther go, so they tarried also, and Luke is responsible for the statement that Jesus advanced a stone’s cast beyond. In accomplishing the work for which Jesus came into the flesh, it became him to sound depths of tribulation and woe into which none of the elect shall ever come. It is very true that no sorrow is, or ever shall be, like unto the sorrow of the Son of God. All of the elect are called to taste of his grief to enable them to

fellowship his sufferings, but more than taste will never be dealt to them. The everlasting arms are ever underneath them, for he was lower than each and all. But the prayer recorded by John in the seventeenth chapter of his narrative is not the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, as many suppose. The Gethsemane prayers, so far as we have any record of them, are found in Matthew xxvi., Mark xiv. and in Luke xxii. This prayer recorded in John, seventeenth chapter, was uttered by the Savior at some time previous to his entering the garden, just where and when is not positively known. It may have been in the supper-room or on the way from the city to the gate of the garden on the side of Mt. Olive, but the where and when of it is not so important as the how and what of it, which we shall now proceed to consider.

The first verse of our text strikes the keynote of the whole prayer, which is infused throughout with a desire for glory and glorification for himself, the Redeemer, all given him of the Father in the covenant of election before time began. Note with care that Jesus here disclaims any ability to glorify God, only as he himself is glorified of God. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Since the only perfect man that ever trod this earth felt the necessity of being glorified of the Father before he could glorify him in return, how can any one of earth's sinful creatures ever dare to say or feel they can glorify God in and of themselves? Surely any one so presumptuous is blind indeed, to say the least. The fullness of glorification, like all other fullness treasured for the people of God, is in Christ Jesus, "for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and as glory is an attribute of the Godhead, its fullness, too, must be in him, and no man can ever glorify God only as he is made a partaker of the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Jesus was never satisfied with this world, all the time he was here in the flesh

he was continually crying out for the living God. This sinful world was no abiding place for him; he had not where to lay his head; he was a pilgrim and a stranger. Despised and rejected of men, misunderstood even by his disciples, forsaken of God in the hell of Golgotha, he was alone indeed. One thing he desired, one thing his soul sought after, and that was to be with the Father in that glory which he had with him before the world was. The spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, using the psalm-singer David as a mouthpiece, says, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Does this not exactly express with conciseness the seventeenth chapter of John? Jesus here in the world was clothed in the likeness of sinful flesh, he had the image of the transgressor, and was not satisfied therewith, neither would he be satisfied until he had arisen from the dead and ascended on high, no more to wear the image of fallen man, but the image of the invisible God, as Paul says in Colossians i. 15. Then he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. It took glory, and nothing short of it, to satisfy him, and never will an heir of glory be satisfied with anything short of that same glory, whether it be revealed here and now in measure only, or hereafter in fullness, for the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of his subjects begets aspirations that are the fellowship of the days of his humiliation endured during his sojourn in the world. To us it appears that the basis upon which the Savior makes this plea to be glorified of the Father, is as the Father has given the Son power over all flesh. This absolute control over all things which is bestowed upon him affords the plea for his desire to be glorified of God. The attitude of the true disciple of Christ toward any blessing he hopes to receive is as this attitude of Jesus: hoping for more blessing because of blessing already received, desiring strength because strength has previously in a measure been given. Like begets like. After so much mercy past, the

believer is encouraged to hope he will not be left to sink in trouble and despair at the last. The purpose for which the Son of God is given power over all flesh is that he shall give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him. It will be clearly noted here that the reception of eternal life by all the chosen of God hinges not upon their violation or effort, but upon the omnipotence of God manifested in the work of Christ. This same omnipotence is also the life and authority of all gospel preaching, for when Jesus, after his resurrection, told his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he prefaced his command to them with these words,"'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore." This preeminence and sovereignty of the risen, victorious Son of God makes effectual the preaching of the gospel, and allows of not the least failure in bringing all the elect of God into the enjoyment of eternal life. In this connection we associate the gospel and eternal life, not for a moment to imply that the preaching can or does impart life, but simply to show that the same divine sovereignty dominates them both. When the word here declares that Jesus is given power over all flesh, it means as it says, "all flesh," and not merely over some, or over part of the flesh. Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, tells us there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. Over all these Jesus has dominant sovereignty in order to give eternal life to the children of promise. Had he not had power over the flesh of the whale, as well as over the flesh of Jonah, the prophet would not have reached the destination God meant for him. He had power over the flesh of birds to compel the ravens to feed Elijah during the drought in Israel. He had power over the flesh of the ass to compel him to rebuke the madness of the prophet Balaam that bestrode him, and also the flesh of the false prophet he controlled so that in spite of his greed for gold he could not curse Israel to satisfy their enemies.

Last, but not least, he controls the flesh of his own people, so that in his own time and way every doubt, fear, questioning and every rebellious thought and principle is quelled to give ascendancy to the spiritual life. Over the flesh of beasts, birds, fishes, men and devils, the anointed Son of God holds supreme sway, that he shall make effectual to all the chosen seed eternal life, which was given them in him before the foundation of the world. All things in creation, providence and grace are in his hand. It must be so, for if there should be one thing, however slight, in all the universe above, around or underneath, that is not subject to the authority of God, what assurance could we have but that that very uncontrolled thing might intervene to unseat some child of God from his right to an inheritance with the saints in light? Perish the thought! He works all things after the counsel of his own will, and works them together, too, for the good of those called according to his purpose. He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Upon this infinite ability of the Son to accomplish the will of the Father rests the everlasting security and safety of every one of the chosen people of God.

What is eternal life? Jesus says here it is the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom God has sent. Life cannot be defined, only in terms of what it does, of how it acts. To say that life is independent of its manifestation is impossible. The knowledge that there is but one true and living God, and that Jesus Christ, sent into the world for the redemption of sinners, is his only begotten Son, is eternal life. Any knowledge short of this is not life in the eternal sense. This knowledge cannot be imparted by man to man, it must come by the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the individual experience of each one of the elect. It takes faith to say that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and at the same time to acknowledge one’s self to be the

chief of sinners. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. When Peter confessed to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Therefore this knowledge, nothing more, nothing less, imparted to the subjects of grace, is eternal life. The life is not one thing, and the knowledge something different; the life is the knowledge and the knowledge is the life. Where such knowledge of God and his Son exists there must of necessity be life eternal, and where the life is, this knowledge will also inevitably be found.

These remarks, which are not intended as exhaustive at all, we now leave with our readers, in the hope they may stir up your pure minds to think upon these things. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 14
July 15, 1914

I JOHN II. 1.

"MY little children, these things I Write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

John means not his little children according to the flesh, but his children in the Lord, those begotten in the gospel, those given him by the grace of God as the fruit of his ministry. These, being "gospel subjects, are not under the old law, but under grace. Sin is transgression of law, and whatever law one is not under that law he cannot transgress. A person living in America cannot transgress some European law. Not living in Europe, he is not subject to the jurisdiction of any

law there. The gospel subject cannot transgress any commandment of the law, for he is no longer under the law. Jesus, by his death, and resurrection from death, brings his elect out from under the law, so that they are no longer under its dominion. Not being under its dominion, they cannot disobey it. When John, therefore, says, "that ye sin not," he is not hoping they will not transgress the law which formerly they were under, but means that he does not want them to transgress or disobey the precepts of Jesus. He is not thinking of the Mosaic or legal dispensation at all, nor of the law of sin and death, but knowing the church is now under the dominion of King Jesus, and subject to his grace, he desires to see believers walking in conformity with the doctrine and the precepts of grace, the teachings of Jesus. He desires to see them walking in the order of the Lord's house blameless, holding fast their faith without wavering. "Sin," as used by John here, means a transgression of the faith and order and practice of the gospel church. To forsake the assembling of ourselves together is to sin wilfully after we have come to a knowledge of the truth, it is a transgression of church order and practice. John tells his "little children" not to do it. To be unequally yoked together with unbelievers at the Lord's table, or in any other department of the house of God, is a "sin" against grace. Do not do it. To keep company in church relationship with fornicators and idolaters is a "sin" against grace. Do not do that. In fact, any departure from the apostolic doctrine, faith and practice as laid down in the New Testament is a "sin" in the New Testament sense, and in the sense in which John here uses the word. The remarkable thing, however, about John's language here is, that instead of threatening the "little children" with dire things in case of their disobedience, he holds forth for their consolation the truth that they have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous. The natural mind might reason that this is a poor way for

John to write, that by telling them they have an advocate with the Father in case they do sin he might encourage them to care little whether they sinned or not, but every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is by grace made to hate sin so that it has no attraction for him, he cannot live in it, it is not hit element. Every sin detected in him causes self-abhorrence and a desire to flee from it. Instead, therefore, of John's encouraging the brethren to sin, by telling them they have an advocate with the Father, he is handing out great comfort to them, for what a comfort it is to know that when we have sinned, however much we may have desired not to do it, that we have been cleansed from that and every other sin by the blood of Jesus. No sin ever committed by the elect but what is washed away in the blood of Jesus. Jesus not only took away all our sins that are past, but all present sins and all sins yet to be committed by us in the future. Thus, John says that it is his wish that .the children of his ministry may be found walking worthy of the high vocation whereunto they are called, that they may be found walking in all the ordinances of the Lord's house blameless; but in case any one "sins,"or transgresses any precept of the gospel, he tells them for their support in adversity that they have an advocate with the Father, and that this advocate is none other than Jesus Christ the righteous, who washed away, not part, but all, their sins in his own blood.

Requested by brother Walter Mordecai, of Vernon, Alabama. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 19.
October 1, 1916

I JOHN IV. i.

"TRY the spirits whether they are of God."

In all ages of the world, from the dawn of creation until now, living witnesses to God's immortal truth have tenanted their houses of clay, travailing in pain and sorrow, it is true, but none the less unceasingly breathing forth praise and adoration to Jehovah, and testifying often in the midst of most awful ordeals, to the salvation found only in the arm of the mighty God, the fortress of his people in all ages in time and forever in eternity.

In all ages of the world, from the dawn of creation until now, have been those ever ready to curse the saints, to inflict all manner of persecutions upon them, striving to beguile them in the name of the Lord (?) and with a mask of seeming saintliness to fall down and worship Baal, and to leave the Shepherd of Israel. Bat he whose goings forth have been established upon the Rock Christ Jesus, is there to stay, and though often menaced by worldly adversaries and persecuted in most hideous fashion, has invariably come forth from the fiery furnace bearing not a single scent of smoke, with his gold not tarnished nor lustre dimmed.

Against these enemies of the doctrine of God our Savior, the apostle sounds the warning note, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Even at that time, so soon after the manifestation of God in the flesh, false prophets have arisen, so cunning as to almost deceive the very elect.

Many come to the saints filled with the holy Spirit of God, animated by a desire to speak to them concerning his goodness and glory, trusting that God will bless their labors to the edification of the saints and to the upbuilding of Zion. Others come to the saints filled with the spirit of their father,

the devil, animated by a desire to gain a good name for themselves, and to win a high place among men, stopping not from hanging salvation upon conditions, and clothing poor, puny man with a fancied glory of his own. Having their eye not single to the glory of God, they deem it an unimportant thing to leave him in the background.

But all who would teach in Zion, no matter by what spirit they are animated, are ushered before God's most awful tribunal, the highest court before which a man can possibly be brought, and from which there is no appeal; the church of the Most High. Here, in the hearts of all God's children, is a judgment-seat erected, and here, too, are unfurled the banner and standard of the truth. By this, the saints "try the spirits whether they are of God." Upon the spirits before them, they set their seal entitling them to serve the Lord in his most holy temple, or banishing them from their presence forever. Among all these spirits, the "man diligent in business, shall stand before kings." Every saint is a king and a priest to God, and before this most regal company only he whose business lies at wisdom's gate, whose whole desire is to praise the Lord for his salvation and mercy to usward, and whose testimony upon the walls of Zion declares him as the Rock and his work as perfect; only he, I say, can stand before this royal priesthood, the assemblage of the saints.

Such is the primary interpretation of the language of John quoted in the beginning. Now, briefly, lot us glance at the secondary or experimental side of it.

None but those who have traveled it, can know how rough is the road from earth to heaven. Now it rises over the summit of a lofty mountain, then dropping a little, it pursues its course along a level plain, farther on, it suddenly drops and is lost to view among the dark recesses of some narrow valley only to rise again to climb the mountain where, lo, the golden sunlight gilds its highest point. How many different

moods of mind possess the christian wayfarer all in a single day. Now doubting, now fearing, now mounting a pinnacle of hope, now plunging into the depths of ‘despair, now calmly resting in sweet deliverance from the pit. Whether held in the bonds of the spirit of prayer, whether imprisoned in meshes of the spirit of hope, whether held by the spirit of grief, we constantly cry out, “Is this God or the devil?” “Is this the kind of affliction the Lord’s people have, or are the whole human race partakers of it? Thus daily does the child of God try the spirits which possess him, to discover whether they are of God or of Satan, whether they are the evidences of the indwelling of grace, or the cropping out of the propensities of the flesh. His constant inquiry is: “Am I, or am I nor, one of the heaven-born sons of grace!” and only as the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit, do we realize that we are the children of God. Today you may not know that the spirit which holds you is of God, but to-morrow, God will interpret your experiences, and by his Spirit, which is always your indwelling guide, bearing witness with and testifying-to your spirit or experience, you will know what the past means. It is by the future that we understand the present, and by the present that we interpret the past. Next year you will realize how much God has been with you this year, but now, as he walks with you daily, you are not aware that it is he, so confident do you feel sometimes that he has left you. This is because you are in the cleft of the rock, and his hand is over you so that you see only his back parts, places where he has been, and not where he is now.

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.
1322 Vise St., Philadelphia., Pa., Feb. 4, 1902.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 70., No. 5.
MARCH 1, 1902.

2 JOHN 10.

"IF there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

What is this doctrine without which one cannot be received into the houses of the church and without one cannot be bade Godspeed? Doctrine is here declared by the inspired apostle to be the essential thing, the real test of one's being a true follower of Jesus. Without this doctrine, one lacks the necessary qualification for the fellowship of the saints. Since, then, this doctrine is so important, let us inquire what it is. In doing this, we shall not do better than to consider other expressions in this second epistle of John. For instance, in the seventh verse: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Here it is plainly stated that not to confess the coming of Christ stamps one as being a deceiver; that is, not to confess Christ's coming in the flesh. The Scriptures plainly teach that Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, was born of a woman, that he took not on him angelic nature, but the seed of Abraham. Now, the seed of Abraham comprises the elect family of God, chosen before the world began. This chosen seed was not elect angels, but elect human beings. So Christ was made a little lower than the angels, and came in the flesh for the suffering of death. To deny this coming in the flesh, to deny that Christ was as truly man as he was truly God, is antichrist and a deceiver and such is not to be contenanced by the house of God. However, it is not enough that we confess the coming of Christ as a historical fact. That, any one could do, just as easily as he could say that George Washington or some other man lived years ago. There must be a confession that Jesus Christ has come in one's own flesh, that he has come in the individual experience of the believer himself. In other words, a living experience of Christ is the real test of genuineness.

This doctrine or teaching of Jesus, more than any other one thing, was the test of discipleship when Jesus was here in the world as a man among men, and this teaching of his caused many who had been following him to withdraw from him. For proof of this, turn to the sixth chapter of John and read the wonderful discourse on the bread of life, from the thirty-second to the fifth-eighth verses. In these words Jesus taught that himself is the bread of life and that the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood are an essential test of whether one has eternal life, that "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." In the sixty-sixth verse, we are told, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Jesus was not here referring to the gospel ordinance of the Lord's supper, but was plainly stating that without one is brought into a living fellowship with Jesus in his sufferings on account of sin and into a living knowledge of the cleansing power of his blood, there can be no such thing as one's possessing eternal life. Life is knowledge, and there is always a certain amount of knowledge accompanying a certain amount of life. Eternal life is always accompanied with a certain quality of knowledge. Wherever eternal life dwells the knowledge that one is a sinner and that his condemnation on account of sin is just. But spiritual knowledge does not stop there. It teaches that human nature is altogether unprofitable in the way of righteousness, that it is wholly incapable of any good thing in the sight of God. In a living way, and not out of books nor by tradition, the sinner continues to be instructed by the Spirit of the great Teacher until he fully realizes the utterly lost condition and is made to throw himself entirely upon the mercy of God, without one jot of anything to merit that mercy. He becomes a beggar, but being really a beggar in heart and not merely by word of mouth, he is not turned empty away from Mercy's door. Christ Jesus appears for his relief and reveals himself to and

within this beggar's soul as the Savior, the only name under heaven among men whereby that beggar must be saved. By the grace of God now appearing through Jesus to this beggar, the beggar is lifted from the dunghill of total depravity and is set among princes, is manifested as the sons of the King; that is, as the child of God. From now on the believer finds his struggle but begun. The burden of condemnation lifted from him and his heart singing for joy because of the new hope springing within him, he finds himself in the company of all the people of God from Abel to the present time; but finds himself, like them, engaged in a warfare, one from which at times he would fain be free, but which cannot end until natural life ends: the warfare of flesh against Spirit and Spirit against flesh. He finds a dying daily going on within him, a continual being delivered unto death, a ceaseless rendering of his body a living sacrifice. In some such way as this there is a continual confession in heart and life that Christ Jesus has come in the flesh. It need not be that one is all the time confessing this by word of mouth, but the confession nevertheless will show itself in the outward life, in the actions of the individual; it will manifest itself int eh conduct of the one having this living experience, shining out through the hands and the feet, bringing forth the fruits appropriate to repentance. Without this manifestation of Christ in the flesh one is a deceiver and an antichrist and cannot be in the fellowship of the house of God. When Christ came in the flesh it was not in order to reinstate or to reinforce the covenant of Moses. That covenant could never bring in salvation to the children of God, but Jesus came to make an end of the old ineffectual covenant and to establish a new and successful covenant. The new covenant became a vital reality to the children of God through the death and resurrection of Christ. This new covenant was promised to be put in the new heart of the child of God and to be imprinted in his mind. In other words, the new covenant or new law

was not to be something abstract from the child of God, but was to be part and parcel of the new creature in Christ Jesus. It was not to be a covenant conditioned upon the volition of the believer, but was to be enforced in the life of the believer by the “wills” and “shalls” of God. Christ, after his resurrection, said “go” and then when, he said “come” and they came. All gospel obedience is this way, and no other. It is obedience springing from the manifestation of Christ in the life of the believer. He said to his disciples, A new commandment give I unto you, That ye love one another. This loving one another is not something we can bring about ourselves. Might just as well try to make the sun shine as to try to make one's self love the church of God. It cannot be done by one's own effort. But how easily one loves the brethren when this commandment is written in the heart by the finger of the Holy Spirit. This love is Christ manifest in the flesh. God is love, and love is God, and whosoever loveth is born of God. If we love God we love those who are begotten of God. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, it is vain to say we love God whom we have not seen. Not having this love, we are deceivers and an antichrist. No wonder, then, Paul says in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians that charity (love) is the one thing without which we are unprofitable to the house of God. Having not love, no matter what else we have or think we have, we are nothing. We might be able to speak ever so angelicly, might be able to dive down into the deep mysteries of God, might be able to expound all prophecies, make great sacrifices or expend ourselves and our substance bountifully, but if it be not prompted by love, have not love in it, what does it all amount to? Nothing. It seems to us that this is the doctrine without which John said a man was not to be received into the house or church. In order to gain admittance there, one must have a vital knowledge of the coming of Jesus in the flesh, and the essence of this living experience is love.

Having not this love, one is classed a deceiver. In another place the inspired writer tells us to mark them that cause divisions, and having nothing to do with them. One who would divide asunder brethren in order to establish his own cause has not the love of God, therefore he does not confess that Christ is come in the flesh. From such, turn away. It is like those two women who brought a child to King Solomon, each woman claiming to be the mother of the child, and asking Solomon to decide the matter. Solomon called for a sword, and was about to divide the child when the woman, who was really the child's mother, called out to the king to let the other woman have it. Thus the woman who really and rightfully loved the child was willing to relinquish her right to it rather than see the child killed. True love in the church of God will always seek the good and welfare of the church itself before the personal good and advantage of one's own self. This is the living teaching or doctrine that Christ is come in the flesh, this doctrine gives one an open door into the houses of the saints; without this doctrine or teaching of love in one's own life one fails to possess that secret of God which gives access to the holy of holies. There is no sight on this earth more pleasant than a church of the saints where all love each other, where each esteems the others better than himself, where all are imbued with the desire to spend and be spent for one another, and any individual who would mar that peace to serve himself would most assuredly not have within him that doctrine of the Master, Love one another. Not having this love he could not confess that Christ is come in the flesh, therefore must be a deceiver and an antichrist. From all such may the Lord deliver his people. - L

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 92, No. 14 – July 15, 1924

JOHN'S BAPTISM VERSUS GOSPEL BAPTISM

(Matthew 3:5-17; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:1-7)

What was there about the baptism of John the Baptist wherewith he baptized those who came unto him truly repenting, that made it incomplete so that Paul had to baptize anew those who came unto the latter having previously been baptized by the former? John's baptism was not recognized by the apostle as having been gospel baptism. Why not?

Those baptized by Paul as cited in Acts 19:6, and upon whom he afterward laid his hands, received gifts of tongues and of prophecy. No such gifts came upon John's disciples following his baptism of them. When Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Ghost came manifestly upon Him. The Holy Ghost did not come upon any others whom John baptized. The Holy Ghost did not come upon those whom John baptized as it afterward did upon the apostles at Pentecost and upon those whom the apostles baptized at that later time. The same measure of understanding and of ability for gospel service was not given to John's disciples as was given to those who were baptized after the resurrection and the ascension of Christ. That the disciples of John had the Holy Spirit is evident. They could not have repented otherwise. It is equally evident, however, that they did not have the "gift of the Holy Ghost". Having the Holy Ghost and having the "gift" which the Holy Ghost only can give, is a distinction though not a difference. The gift which the Holy Ghost gives to those baptized by Him in this age of grace is the ability to minister in the sanctuary of God, the ability to discern Spiritual things, which ability carries with it the enabling power to rightly divide the word of truth. Those baptized by John prior to the exit of the Old Testament order of things did not have this ability.

John’s baptism was anticipatory: looking toward redemption and the kingdom of heaven. Gospel baptism is retrospective: the result of redemption having been accomplished and of everlasting righteousness brought in. Thus, John’s disciples were looking for the Messiah to come to inaugurate the kingdom. Their knowledge was incomplete, owing to the fact that they did not know that the Messiah for whom they were looking was the Jesus who had been crucified. Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, which means that he knew and could set forth the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The New Testament had not then been committed to writing. He was fervent in the spirit and taught diligently the things of the Lord, all from the Old Testament standpoint; but he was short on knowledge. His deficiency in this direction was made up to him by Aquila and Priscilla who were graciously enabled to open his eyes to the things he had not before seen. This that he had not before understood was that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of whom he had been preaching, the Messiah for whom all Israel had been looking but in whom all Israel did not believe. When he understood this, such understanding rounded out Apollos’ ministry and made his service to the church more efficient than it had before been. And when others of John’s disciples were given similar insight into this great truth: that the expected Messiah was none other than the Christ whom they had crucified, then they, too, received baptism in the name of this crucified and risen One and afterwards received gifts by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

John baptized with water only. Christ baptizes His own with the Holy Ghost, and will eventually baptize the wicked with the fire of everlasting destruction from the presence of God.

John himself alone baptized, his disciples did not baptize.

Christ baptized nobody with water, but His disciples did.

John baptized unto repentance in that those who came to him did thereby separate themselves from the pollutions of that day and time. Gospel baptism is because of the remission of sins by the sacrifice of Christ and is the outward sign of the inward grace of regeneration(that is, the process and accomplishment of the Spiritual birth---hs 8/11/2014).

John's baptism was a confession of sin and an acknowledgment of its just penalty, death. Gospel baptism is a confession of salvation from sin and from death, through the resurrection.

John's baptism was legal in its aspect, being under the law dispensation. Gospel baptism is gracious in its character and belongs to the age of grace.

John baptized in Jordan only, nowhere else. Gospel baptism can be administered by a proper administrator to a proper subject in any stream or pool of water anywhere.

Jordan mean "descending" and appropriately pictured forth the truth that under God's holy law which in itself knew no mercy and which could not of itself clear the guilty, we are all by nature going down to death and the grave in obedience to the edict that went forth in the beginning upon our first parents because of their disobedience.

John came by water only. Christ came not only by water, but by blood also.

Those who came to John to be baptized, evidencing their true repentance, went down into Jordan not confessing Christ, but confessing their sins and the just penalty which their sins entailed. Thus the waters of the Jordan, not literally but confessionally, ran filthy with the unloaded sins of the people. Jesus came to Jordan not confessing any sin, he had none, but he came to fulfill righteousness. John at first forbade him baptism. John did this because he knew the baptism with which he was baptizing was a confession of sin,

and he knew this Lamb of God to be spotless and without sin. Hence it seemed to John utterly inappropriate that Jesus should receive baptism at his hands. John knew further that he had need to be baptized himself and thus confess his own sins. But when Jesus told him it was appropriate that they two should fulfill righteousness, then John demurred no more. This fulfilling righteousness meant that Jesus must go down into the stream and be baptized in the burden of guilt with which the people had confessedly loaded the water. He came up out of the water having manifestly assumed His people's sins, which sins He bore in His body all through His ministry inaugurated at His baptism, and which sins He purged away in His death on the cross by shedding of His precious blood. Thus when He began to be about thirty years of age, the age at which the Levites began their ministry, Jesus began His public ministry. His first act of that earthly service was to go down in Jordan, assume manifestly the confessed sins of His children, come up out of the water bearing those sins, and make an end of those sins in His cross and end His earthly service by dying; thereafter arising from the dead to begin His heavenly ministry upon which He fully entered at His ascension, and which ministry He is now accomplishing for His people at the right hand of God as their eternal High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, the pattern of Aaron's priesthood having been finished.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES,
MIDDLETOWN, NY
MARCH 1934, Vol. 102, No. 3

JONAH III. 10.

"AND God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

A sister living in Cobleskill, N.Y., has asked us to give our views on the above. This Scripture, like some others elsewhere in the Scripture, has seemed on casual reading to refute the idea of God knowing beforehand what is to come to pass. However, the Bible from first to last is one harmonious whole, and no one part of it contradicts some other part. If it seems to us to do so, the contradiction is owing to our inability to understand, and not because there is any lack of unity in the word itself. The word declares that God is of one mind, that he changes not, indeed, that with him there is not the least shadow of turning. It will not do, therefore, for any man to explain the Scriptures as to imply that God does change his mind, or that he ever turns from his purpose. God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against that city. Jonah thought not to go, and so set sail for Tarshish. In this was he thwarting God's purpose? No, for the farther away from Nineveh he thought he was getting, the nearer he was unwittingly coming to that fish which God had prepared to carry him straight to Nineveh to obey God's command. To men, and even to Jonah, perhaps, it may have seemed that he was contradicting God, but no so, all of Jonah's steps, as well as those of all men, were included in God's divine arrangement. God knew beforehand exactly what Jonah would do, and God knew beforehand exactly what the Ninevites would do at the preaching of Jonah. The word that Jonah preached was, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." At the preaching of Jonah the people of Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a feast. They put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least. Even the king arose from his throne, laid aside his robe

from him and covered him with sackcloth and sat in ashes. Here we see repentance on the part of the Ninevites, in that they turned away from their wickedness, and appeared to fast and sorrow for what they had done. In Jonah himself, though he had but lately tried to go against God, there was no sympathy for the Ninevites in their repentance, and he still thought that God ought to destroy them. When he saw that God did not destroy them, as he had understood God to say he would do, Jonah was very angry. There is less mercy with our fellow-man than with God. God is infinitely more charitable toward the shortcomings of his people than man can be. No wonder that David said he would rather fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men. When it says that God repented of evil, it means that it seemed to Jonah that God had repented, or had turned away from doing what he said he would do. As a matter of fact, a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a day does not always signify in God's dealing with men twenty-four hours as it does with us. History shows that the city of Nineveh was destroyed just forty years after the time of Jonah's preaching, therefore the Lord meant forty days to be forty years. Jonah, however, evidently had his own idea as to what God meant, and became angry when the things did not turn out as he thought they ought to. This reminds us of the time when Hezekiah was sick and the Lord sent him word by the prophet that he should die and not live. Hezekiah thought the Lord meant that he was to die immediately. But the Lord had not said when he was to die. He told him simply to set his house in order, for he should die and not live. How was Hezekiah to set his house in order if the Lord had meant that he was to die at once? Evidently Hezekiah did not think about this, but construed the message of the Lord to mean that he was to die right away, hence he prayed to the Lord to spare his life. The Lord sent the prophet again to tell to him, I have added fifteen years to his days. Notice that the Lord had added

nothing to Hezekiah's life really, but added fifteen years to what Hezekiah thought was his term of life. In this the Lord changed his mind not at all, but the Lord changed Hezekiah's mind in answer to his prayer, and showed him that death was not as near, by fifteen years, as Hezekiah thought it was. The Lord is certainly not to blame for the false conceptions that men place upon his word. If Jonah thought forty days to means days of twenty-four hours each, as men reckon days, whose fault was that? The Lord intended to destroy the city in forty years evidently, for it was overthrown in that time. The Lord meant a day to be one year. This is not at all strange, since God dwells in infinity, and what seems like years to us are but as moments or days to him. God did not change in his purpose, although Jonah thought he had. It seemed to Jonah that God had changed his mind, that he had bidden him preach against that city and then had failed to make his word good. This was not true, but God did not do what Jonah thought he ought to do, and this is not strange, since God has nowhere and at no time guaranteed or promised to fulfill all our ideas of him. But even if God had changed his mind, and had really turned away from doing the evil that he said he would do, who was Jonah to say that God had not a perfect right to do it? This, God showed Jonah in the gourd which grew up and covered Jonah. When God destroyed this gourd Jonah was very angry because God had destroyed it. Why should Jonah be vexed at the withering of the gourd, when he evidently would not have cared had all Nineveh been destroyed. Now, if Jonah thought the gourd ought to have been spared, why should God not spare Nineveh if he pleased? This was a demonstration to Jonah that he had better put his hand over his mouth and keep silence than to enter into judgment with God. God had not changed his purpose in the least with regard to Nineveh, as was proved forty years later, when the city actually was overthrown. But even had God determined not do as Jonah

thought he would, who was Jonah, or who is any man, to say that God has not a perfect right to do as it pleases him? - L

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
Vol. 87, No. 12 – June 15, 1919

I KINGS XVII. 6

"*And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening: and he drank of the brook.*"

A brother living in New Jersey has written to us asking that we write something on the above passage of Scripture. We shall try to do so, but feel that he himself could better have done so, inasmuch as his mind seems to have been exercised upon it. In the law of Moses there were certain things named which were to be considered by Israel as abominable things, things which should not be eaten. The abominable or unclean things among the fowls included the raven, the flesh of which was never to be eaten by Israel. It is said that the smell of death is so grateful to ravens that when, in passing over a sheep, they perceive a tainted smell they will cry and croak loudly. Also, in passing over a human habitation, if they detect a sickly or deathly odor they make it known by their cries. Thus the croaking of ravens has come to mean a sign of death. For three years and six months it rained not in Israel. During this time death was plentifully in evidence and the ravens were abundant. These birds fed on death. Dead things pleased them. Nevertheless, contrary to the raven's nature, God made them carry bread and meat to his servant, the prophet Elijah. However, it was impossible for the servant to eat aught but what was clean. In having the ravens to carry this clean food of bread and meat to Elijah

God showed his power, in causing the ravens to do that which their nature contradicted, in order to feed the prophet.

Through all the wonderful way in which the Lord provided for Elijah during that long drought we see confirmed the promise that God will never suffer the righteous to fail, nor allow his children to beg their bread. The Lord will provide. Not in our own time and way, but in his own good time and according to his pleasure, the Lord will feed the souls of his famished saints. Though Elijah was all alone, so far as human or spiritual companionship was concerned, yet the Lord caused unclean birds to feed him.

Now, to draw a spiritual lesson from this, let us first note that the doctrine of salvation as preached by worldly religionists is the doctrine of death. Salvation by works, based on the merit of man, is a corrupt doctrine. Unclean birds feed upon it. Ravens love it, doves hate it. All the works of fallen man are dead works. Any tower of Babel erected out of the brick and slime of man's ingenuity in order to get into God's favor by their own good works, is doomed to end in failure and a temple in ruins. We know that God has people scattered everywhere, they are in every nation under heaven. Among the ranks of the Arminians God has his people. These are in captivity to Babylon, but the root of the matter of a gracious experience is in their souls. We believe that true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are scattered among the various religious denominations of men; many perhaps have never heard the true gospel fall from the lips of men truly called to the ministry. These are alone, as Elijah was alone, in the midst of a spiritual drought. Yet they must be fed, and God sees that they are fed, even if he has to compel the ravens to carry them food. By the ravens we mean so called preachers, men not called and qualified by the Holy Ghost to preach, but men who are the product of the colleges and schools endowed by worldly wealth to turn out these duly

certified preachers: preachers who preach their own righteousness and that of their fellow-men, but who are entire strangers to the righteousness of God by faith. Now, it so occurs at times that these “ravens,” who love “dead works” and dead doctrines, do unwittingly preach the truth. The reason of this is because God has some of his sheep ensnared in Babylon and he compels these “ravens” unconsciously to themselves to carry clean food to his isolated and lonely children in the midst of the drought spiritually prevailing in the world.

Several years ago, while living in the city of Philadelphia, a brother in the church and ourself took ourselves one night to a church service in one of the largest edifices in that city. The congregation thronged it to the doors. Seats were hardly to be had, and many stood. The minister arose to preach, and we expected to hear nothing but the usual exhortation to creature works in order to obtain the favor of God. He read for his text in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, first chapter, twelfth verse, what startled us as being a very strange text for an Arminian to select, and we asked ourself how he expected to preach salvation by works from such a Scripture: “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord bath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.” He started in, not preaching Jeremiah, but Christ, and kept on preaching Christ from first to last. Not once, that we remember, did he refer his text to Jeremiah, but throughout expounded the text as a prophetic portrayal of the sufferings of Christ that were to come. He showed how that Christ’s sufferings were not like any other suffering, that those sufferings of his were all for sins, not his own, but those of his people. He traced the path of the Savior from the manger to the cross, showing the burden becoming greater and the pain more terrible the nearer the end came. The day of God’s fierce anger was the day that Jesus hanged upon

the cross, nailed there through hands and feet, paying the penalty of his people's transgressions. The day of vengeance was in his heart, he was repaying to his Father all our debt. Nowhere through all the sermon did this preacher have anything to say about what sinners must do to be saved. He told simply and beautifully and with power the old yet ever new story of redeeming love. Yet, notwithstanding all this, we happen to know that this preacher was a fullfledged Arminian. He did not always preach as he did that night. He was telling the truth, but did not realize the full meaning of what he said. Had he done so, he could have never again preached any but that doctrine the rest of his life. Our explanation of this remarkable occurrence is that God had some of his sheep in that corner of Babylon and he was causing that raven to carry bread and meat to them that night. The preacher was declaring what his own nature, and what his own preaching at other times, contradicted. God will see to it that his people shall be fed, and, when necessary, will feed them by the ravens, as he did Elijah. On the other hand, if we consider the prophet Elijah as a type of Jesus in his humiliation while here below, then we shall conclude that though the world was a most unfriendly place to him, and while all the dominant powers of earth were against him, yet all things and All persons among whom he moved were being bent to his will and were serving his purpose, even though in their own natures they were opposed to him. Men and devils were made to minister to the accomplishment of his purpose in the work of salvation, though being unconscious of it themselves all the time. And as Elijah drank of the brook, so it is declared of Jesus that he drank of the brook in the way. (Psalms cx. 7.) As a brook is a stream of running or living water, so the river of water of life flows from the throne of God. By this river of God, this living water, the tree of life (Jesus) is established. Because it never goes dry his leaf never withers. He brings forth his fruit in his season. Then

Jesus, though in the midst of a cold, unfriendly world, a world in which of itself there was no room for him, was fed continually by the supplies which omnipotence afforded: the living water of life from the throne of God, and the bowing to his will of all things in earth and under the earth, unclean as ravens though they might be.

H. H. Lefferts

Republished – Signs of the Times
Volume 150, No. 12
December 1982

2 KINGS XVII. 17

"AND they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger."

This is written regarding the conduct of Israel. Israel left, not part, but all the commandments of God, and made to themselves other gods: molten images, even two calves, and made a grove and served Baal. In addition to this, they involved their children in their own net, causing them to pass through the fire to these gods. All this was exactly in opposition to what God had commanded them by the hand of Moses. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or a witch." – Deut. xviii. 10. "And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." – Lev. xviii. 21. The history of Israel, as we have said before in these columns, proved conclusively that it is not in man's power to walk in conformity with the precepts of God. It is his nature to

disobey God. This the law of Moses amply demonstrated. Molech was a heathen god, who was worshiped by human sacrifices. Figuratively, we might say that loss of life or sacrifice of principle is passing through the fire to Molech. Whenever the believer sacrifices some principle of truth to satisfy his own nature, or to please his fellow-man, he is serving Molech. Whenever the believer loses his life in running after the things of the world, this, too, is passing through the lire to Molech. What will it profit a man (a believer) to gain the world and lose his own soul, or himself? One cannot lose one's soul eternally, but there is such a thing as the things of the world occupying first place in our thoughts and performances and becoming thus engrossed to the submergence of all spirituality; When this is the case, one experimentally loses his life in pursuit of that which satisfies not, and spends his money for that which is not bread. Our children are our offspring, our thoughts are the offspring of our brain, our deeds the offspring of our will. Now, when our natural will predominates, our thoughts and deeds spend themselves in pleasing our natural man, the spiritual man becomes submerged for the time being, and our children (thoughts and deeds) pass through the fire to Molech. This is to be condemned in the life of every child of God, and will receive its judgment at the seat of the Anointed, before whose authority we at all times stand, and to whom we must give account in the body for the deeds done in the body. It always causes us to wonder how any one who has been brought to believe that salvation is by grace, and grace alone, can hear to see their children become slowly, entangled in the delusions of men. The whole world to-day is wrapped "up in serving itself and the god of its own creating, of its own imagination, its Molech. We never see little children of all ages trooping to Sunday-school of a Sunday morning or afternoon but what we are reminded of the people of olden time causing their children to pass

through the fire to Molech. The world of the present day is bringing up its young in the Sunday-school, where it is inculcating error into the childish mind which never can be erased by any power short of the grace of God. Now, it is bad enough to see this Molech worship being engaged in by the people of the world, but how much worse to . see Old Baptists sending their children to Sunday-school, and thus also causing their children to pass through the fire to Molech. How dare we sacrifice our children to a false god in whom we have been made to see there is no virtue at all, but only evil altogether? The Sunday-school as at present conducted is nothing in the world but a nursery for the various Arminian denominations, in which are hatched out the error-spreading hordes of the generations to come. In these Sunday-schools false interpretations are put upon the Scriptures. Even the letter of the Bible is not correctly taught, but is given many twists and wrenches here and there to make it conform to what men think it ought to be, instead of what God says it is. Now, we know very well that we cannot teach our children the truth, but we can at least abstain from teaching them error. If our child is destined to be an Arminian, let it be an Arminian without any of our help. We know, too, that if our children are to be called by grace to a knowledge of the truth, all the Sunday-schools in the world cannot prevent it, and that the Lord is able to bring them out of a Sunday-school if they are in one. But all this does not relieve the parent of his duty to do that which he knows to be right to the best of his ability. We have noticed that where Old Baptists raised their children to not go to Sunday-school, and to go to meeting with their parents, that it does not make Old Baptists of them, but it does inculcate in the child a respect for their parents' belief, even if the child at heart knows nothing of the truth experimentally. On the other hand, we have noticed that where Old Baptists let their children go to Sunday-school, and to other Arminian religious

doings, rarely or never taking their children to meeting with them, that they have very little respect for their parents' belief, and openly criticise it. There may be exceptions to this rule, but then there are not many rules but what have their exceptions. Let us not cause our children to pass through the fire to Molech, let us not sacrifice them to principles we know to be false, let us not lose our lives in the pursuit of vanity.

We have written this at the request of sister E. E. Workman, of Harding, W. Va. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 8
April 15, 1916

"LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF"

Leesburg, Va.
August 16, 1924

Mr. John F. Davis,
Boyce, La.

My Dear Mr. Davis:

Your letter of the 12th came this morning and I expect to be away all next week, so unless I answer your inquiry immediately I may overlook it altogether, and I don't want to do that.

The scripture about which you ask reads as follows: "But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." 1 Cor. 11:28.

This as you know, refers to partaking of the church ordinance called by us the "Lord's Supper", and the apostle is designating the proper characters to partake of it, and the proper spirit in which it should be partaken of.

For instance, he says in this connection that those who eat and drink of this supper not discerning the Lord's body, eat and drink unworthily, and thus eat and drink damnation (condemnation) to themselves. This means that those who fail to discern the Lord's body in this ordinance are still in a condemned state, or still in a state of nature, and therefore not worthy to take part in the supper, have not the proper qualifications.

The Lord's body is the church of the living God. Not to see his body is not to see the church. To see the church means not simply to see the men and women composing the church, but it means to see them not as they are in the flesh but to see them perfect in Christ Jesus, not having their own righteousness which is as filthy rags, but being clothed upon with the righteousness of Christ. When you view the church, do you see them as sinful creatures of Adam's fallen race, or do you see them as saints of God in the beauties of the holiness of Christ Jesus? If you see them the latter way, then that proves that you are discerning the Lord's body, and therefore you would not be eating and drinking unworthily in the matter of the Lord's Supper.

This is the reason why Paul says let a man examine himself and so let him eat; that is, let him eat in that way or in that manner. And the proper way or manner in which to eat and drink of this supper is in the spirit of self-examination, not sitting in judgment or criticism upon one's brethren, but examining one's own self to see whether we are seeing the Lord's body or are we simply seeing an earthly body; are we viewing every man perfect in Christ or are we viewing them in all the imperfections of fallen nature and charging their faults up against them?

When one realizes that the brethren are all better than he is; and when one feels to be the chief of sinners and the least of saints, and he wants to be at the feet of the brethren and not

at their head as leader, then that one is seeing the church or the Lord's body and is qualified through that spirit of self-examination to partake of the ordinance. Though feeling keenly his unworthiness to eat and drink of it, he would not be eating and drinking unworthily.

This Spirit that searches the hearts and tries the reins of men is no earthly candle lighted by earthly wisdom, but is the Holy Spirit of God. When this Spirit is at work in us, we will examine ourselves, we cannot help it, – we shall be bound to do it. And the more this Spirit examines us through and through, the more we shall feel our unfitness to be in the church, and the more we shall feel the brethren to be above us and better than ourselves. It is in this way, a poor sinner is made to see the church of God, that is, to see the Lord's body. In this way, the Spirit cleanses the vessel from self-confidence and fleshly idols and makes it fit for the service of the sanctuary. We cannot handle the holy things of God's house unless we be clean and that is by having the power of the Living Word speaking in our soul. When that power does speak in one, every hidden thing is brought to the light and one's confidence in the flesh is utterly destroyed. This light not only destroys self-confidence but it shines from the face of Jesus revealing him to the downcast sinner as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Thus the sinner finds nothing in self in which to glory but Christ becomes All in All.

Isaiah said that he was a man of unclean lips because his eyes had seen the King the Lord of hosts, and all his train filling the temple. Was not Isaiah looking at Christ and the church by faith here? I think so. And in comparison, he saw himself filthy. The fact that he saw his filthiness was evidence he had seen the body of Christ. This made him a worthy follower of the Lamb. Therm fore, let us examine ourselves to see whether we have any evidence that we have seen the

body of Christ. If so, we have one sign to encourage us to eat and drink of his holy ordinance.

Yours to serve in the gospel, H. H. Lefferts

(The above was sent to us by Sister Mary Dams of Shreveport, La., daughter of the late Brother Davis to whom Elder Lefferts wrote it in 1924. We are glad to publish it for it will find a ready response in the feelings of each brother or sister who reads it, who has often been made to examine himself. – J. D. W.)

Republished – Signs of the Times
Volume 136, No. 3
March, 1968

LUKE III. 17.

"WHOSE fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with lire unquenchable."

Brother William Mellott, of Hopewell, Pa., laments his isolation from the meetings of the Old School Baptists, as there is no church of our faith and order very near him, and he gets to hear preaching but very seldom indeed. In his letter to us he requests us to write on the above text, and we feel a desire to comply with it, for if the SIGNS has any mission at all to fulfill, we feel it must be to these lone sheep scattered over the country who are exiled from their church privileges, and who rarely, if ever, enjoy the preached gospel. Concerning the above passage of Scripture, brother Mellott says in his letter: "It has been on my mind for a long time, and I have thought several times of trying to write on it myself, but I am such a poor writer and poor speller and feel so poor in spiritual knowledge that I could not make the attempt. Thirty or thirty-five years ago I went to an Arminian

Bible class, and they had this subject under consideration, and explained the chaff as representing the unregenerate. I contended in this case that the chaff represented the Adamic body, or old or outer man, and the wheat represented the inner or new man, created after God in true righteousness and holiness, as it is through much tribulation we enter the kingdom, and in the world we shall have tribulation, and only in him, peace. Tribulation means to thresh out or separate this chaff from the wheat. This chaff, it seems to me, is something belonging to the wheat, it is the hull of the wheat, and therefore must be threshed out. We do not thresh wheat to injure it, but to clean it, or separate it, from the chaff (or flesh), for except a man deny himself and take up his cross, he cannot be Jesus' disciple." We have thought best to quote this much from our brother's letter in order to give our readers his viewpoint of the matter before proceeding to give our own views upon it. Such views as we have we are not indebted to any man for, and endeavor to present simply that which is our own mind's exercise upon the subject. There is something peculiarly attractive about the ministry of John the Baptist, and it arises from the fact that he was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." He was not the One crying, but the "voice" of One. It was the Lord that cried in that wilderness, but the Baptist was the "voice" of that One, the Lord. He was God's mouthpiece, and the words that he spoke were "thus saith the Lord." John the Baptist was not a reincarnation of the prophet Elijah, he was not Elijah come to earth again, but the same Spirit that dwelt in Elijah of old now dwelt in the Baptist, so much so that his ministry and the message he brought bore a striking similarity to the ministry of Elijah, for which reason he is called Elijah or Elias in Matt. xi. 13, 14: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Again, in Malachi iv. 5: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the

great and dreadful day of the Lord." Both of the above Scriptures might seem on the face of them to signify that there was to be a reincarnation of the very personality and individuality of Elijah in the person of John the Baptist, but that this is not what was meant is sure from Luke i. 17: "He [the Baptist] shall go before him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elias." Here it is shown in what manner John was to be Elijah: in spirit and power. Now, if you will take the trouble to turn back to the Old Testament history of Elijah, and compare it with the ministry of the Baptist, we think spiritual readers cannot fail to notice the marked resemblance between the ministry and message of the two men, that indeed the same spirit and the same power did dwell in them both. John came preaching "in the wilderness of Judea," says Matthew. Not so much "wilderness," in the sense that Judea was a barren country, for we doubt if that be literally true from what is said of the land of Judea in other Scriptures, but, "wilderness" religiously and spiritually. For the four hundred years from Malachi to the birth of Jesus and the ensuing ministry of the Baptist, there was no "open vision," no prophet in all Israel, so far as we know, but instead there was a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Israel was apostate, sinking lower and ever lower in moral, political and religious corruption. Creeds, sects and divisions flourished apace, and Israel was rent with jealousies and bickerings of every sort. Was not this, then, a "wilderness" indeed into which John came preaching, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"? He was not afraid to preach the word straightforwardly, he did not use innuendos nor evasions, but called things by their right names, making no compromise with error or the hidden evils of darkness and unbelief. He stigmatized certain ones as "vipers," because he saw in them no fruit of a divinely wrought repentance. When some mused in their hearts and thought to call him the Messiah long expected, he immediately disabused them of that idea, in

saying, “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” The word never speaks but error is confounded and truth exalted. Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, whether spoken by prophets of old or by his Son Jesus Christ, every word is a discriminating, a separate word. When God speaks judgment is always in evidence, even when he speaks in love and in mercy. Something is separated from something else. The coming of Jesus changed nothing, it simply manifested what always was. It put things in their right positions, in the places where they belonged: this in the garner, that in the fire; this on the right side, that on the left, and so on. Our text declares that he (Jesus) will thoroughly purge “his” floor, not the floor of some one else, but only his floor. This threshing-floor in this instance we believe to have been national Israel. Israel was under the old dispensation the elect nation of God, separate and distinct from all other nations. But in this nation there was much that was chaff, and therefore no good. The coming of Jesus into the world and among that people was a time for a winnowing to begin there, and for a work of purging to be accomplished among them. The preaching of Jesus made some mad. And others glad, and this attitude of theirs showed whether they were trees bringing forth good or evil fruit; his preaching did not make them either good or bad, but simply made manifest what manner of spirit they were of, whether they were under the devil’s sway or being swayed by that wind, God’s Holy Spirit, that bloweth where it listeth. All through the three years and a half of Jesus’ public ministry he was threshing them: the Israelites. His own sheep he called by their names and they followed him; he brought them into his fold, gathered them into his garner. Those who hated him and despitefully used him he left where they were: in their godless state, without hope and without God in the world,

under the wrath of God, under the power of the law, in the unquenchable fire. We understand the unquenchable fire here to mean, not a literal fire, but the eternal judgments of God, which are never revoked nor amended, hence are unquenchable. Under these eternal judgments of God against sin, in this fire which cannot be put out, were all those who had not faith to believe in Jesus, and who did not therefore rejoice at his coming, which only maddened instead of gladdened them. Some of these who at that time detested him and his truth, and who were thus in the fire, might afterwards, by the grace of God, have their positions changed, and they thus be on the side of truth and righteousness. In that case, the fire of God's wrath against sin would not be put out, but they should be through Jesus' salvation brands plucked from the burning. This winnowing or purging of the threshing-floor of national Israel culminated in the year seventy, at which time Jerusalem was destroyed by the Gentile power of imperial Rome and the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, whither they remain unto this day as chaff thrown into the fire. But before that dispersion came, some upwards of thirty years before, the day of Pentecost had fully come, the church of Jesus Christ in its visible gospel organization had been set up as described in the Acts, and the wheat (those who gladly received the word having been ordained unto eternal life) had been gathered into this garner of the gospel kingdom. Now, such is our view of the primary meaning of the threshing or winnowing as spoken of by John in our text. The "fan," or *ptuon*, as it is in the Greek original manuscript, literally means "winnowing-shovel," and this "fan," or winnower, is the word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, alive and full of power, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. This living word is the "fan " with which he winnowed them. This "fan" was in his hand, subject to his power, entirely in his control,

just as are the winds that he holds in his fists and which he directs to blow whither he will. However, it would not be doing violence to the primary meaning of the text to say that there is an experimental side to it, a viewpoint that touches in a living way every subject of God's grace everywhere. Every quickened sinner is a duplex being, he has two lives: the life of Adam and the life of Christ. From this arises a conflict, a warfare that knows no discharge so long as we are in this earthly tabernacle. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. During the old dispensation the expectation of Israel was that the Messiah would one day come to them and exalt them literally and visibly among the nations of the earth. They looked for this Messiah to come in great pomp and splendor, such magnificence as would be visible and tangible to them. They expected him to come sitting on a great white throne, in the clouds of heaven, robed in royal purple, accompanied by myriads of angels. The prophets had used such highly wrought figurative language in foretelling his coming that the Jews took it literally, since they had not at all any spiritual conception of what it all meant. All this belief on their part was no more than so much chaff, it was wholly imaginary and illusive. But even the disciples of Jesus who followed him and who loved him for the very truth's sake because he alone had the words of eternal life, even they had much of this chaff wrapped about them, from which they needed to be thrashed. They, too, looked for a literal kingdom, visible and tangible, to be established by this Jesus whom they loved. They had no conception of why he should die, and were discouraged and disappointed when he did die. Not until he arose from the dead and ascended to the Father and sent them the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, did the scales fall from their eyes and they see clearly. Not until then was the chaff purged away, and Peter and the rest able to interpret the Old Testament correctly. Thus, they were begotten "again," this time to a

“lively hope,” by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, as never before, they knew what Jesus had meant when he had said to them, The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation; Know ye not that the kingdom of heaven is within you? and what he meant when he told Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world. This is where arises the benefit of clear, fearless, God-fearing, gospel preaching. The gospel never gave life to any sinner, nor ever will, the Spirit alone quickens, but the gospel does, take off the graveclothes, it looses the believer and lets him go. Around every child of God when he first comes to a knowledge of God and godliness, and more or less all through his subsequent life here in the flesh, there cluster many traditional notions and ideas borrowed from the Egyptians, of which he is prone to make a golden calf to which to bow the knees. From these fleshly idolatries, which have no scriptural sanction whatever, he needs to be fanned, or winnowed, for the everlasting disapproval (fire) of God is upon these gods of ours. Through this purging the believer comes to stand upon sure ground, and to be established more and more in the solid truth. The church of God in its visible organization has been plagued with this chaff ever since Christ’s day, and we suppose will always. be until Christ appears for our ultimate deliverance. The Corinthians were worried with contention regarding baptism which threatened to break them into sects following this man or that, also with reference to the Lord’s supper, and all this chaff had to be fanned out. The Galatians, some of them, had that chaffy idea that though our salvation begins in and by the Spirit, we must do something somehow to carry it on. This had to be purged out. Arminius many years later preached his chaffy free-willism, and this had to be fanned out of the church. Coming down within the recollection of some now living, the chaff of Sunday- schools, of Missionaries, of Theological Seminaries, all had to be fanned out, and it was done in the

stormy years around 1832. While the church of God is perfect, it is only perfect in Christ, it never is perfect in the flesh. There never has been on this earth such a thing as a perfect church in the flesh. We are all struggling toward an unrealizable ideal, only so far as it is attained in and by the spiritual apprehension of faith. Never from chaff will any of us be wholly free until we are wholly spiritual, and that will never be on this side of eternity. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 14.
July 15, 1916.

LUKE XVI. 1-13.

BROTHER Dr. J. H. McDonald,of Puyallup, Wash., about a year ago asked us to write on the above portion of Scripture. We did not feel at that time that we could do so, but during the past year we have had some exercise of mind on this Scripture, and will here try to write some of the things that have come into our mind upon this subject, leaving them for brother McDonald's consideration, and that of the other readers of the SIGNS. According to this parable there was a certain rich man which had a steward, who was accused unto him of having wasted his goods. These accusations of unfaithfulness on the part of his steward caused the rich man to demand an accounting of the steward. Knowing he was to be removed from the stewardship for his dishonesty, the steward was at a less what to do: "What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed." Thereupon he resolves to add to his already unfaithful record more unfaithfulness: "I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." So he called every one to

him that was in debt to his master or lord. One man owed the rich man an hundred measures of oil, another owed an hundred measures of wheat. Now, in order to gain the friendship of these debtors to have something to fall back on in the day of his failure the steward juggles the accounts and fraudulently reduces the indebtedness of these men, to the detriment of the rich man whose steward he is supposed to be. Now when the lord of this steward, that is, the rich man, discovered what the steward had done he commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely. Even though the rich man himself had been defrauded he could not help but commend the wisdom which had prompted the steward to look out for himself. This wisdom so commended by the rich man is the wisdom of this world, and not the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God prompts one to suffer himself to be defrauded rather than defraud another, while the wisdom of this world looks out for self every time, and seeks its own ends through the defeat of others. Right here we are told: The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. This expression does not mean that the people of the world have more of the real true wisdom than have the children of God (light), for none have the real true wisdom but the people of God, but it means that what passes current as wisdom among the children of this world, "in their generation" is more plentiful far among the children of this world than among the Lord's people. If you want to find that which is accounted wise and smart and clever go not among the children of light, but among the children of this world. When it comes to looking out for self, to being resourceful, persevering, self-confident and all-conquering, the man of the world excels the man of God every time. He has more of that kind of wisdom than has the man of God, for the child of this world is wiser in his generation than is the child of God in the same generation. Now Jesus did not cite this parable to his disciples as an example of what they must do. Jesus is

not giving this to his people in this instance as a standard of conduct to be aspired to by them. No, but on the other hand, Jesus cites this instance of the rich man and his steward as showing what his disciples are not to do. While the lord of this steward, who was the rich man, commended the plan of his steward, the Lord of the twelve disciples did not commend any such principle in them, but commanded them to faithfulness, not unfaithfulness, in the unrighteous mammon, that if they were not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who would commit unto them the true riches? If this steward defrauded his first master, what guarantee had the second master that he would not defraud him, too? "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" The whole idea of the parable is to show how contrary to the true principle of godliness are the principles that pass current for wisdom among the children of this world. Right living in a disciple of Jesus demands faithfulness in the unrighteous mammon (that which is another man's) as a forerunner of faithfulness in the true riches (that which is your own). "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least [as that unjust steward], is unjust also in much." The word "mammon" means riches; the word "unrighteousness" means devoid of or having no righteousness. Therefore, the unrighteous mammon means the wealth in which is no righteousness. It is our view that by the unrighteous mammon, Jesus meant the legal covenant or law of Moses. All the wealth of legalism has not a vestige of righteousness in it, that is, the true righteousness, or righteousness of God. The law, with all its prescribed duties, sacrifices and ordinances, could never make one sinner clean, or give life to the dead. The law abounded in rituals, ceremonies, feasts, fasts and holy days, in offerings for sin and all uncleanness, yet all were unrighteous; not one sinner was made a whit better or more righteous, though he literally

observed it all. All the appurtenances of the law which came by Moses constituted its wealth or mammon, and it was unrighteous, because it was intended by God simply as a type, and was utterly without power to bestow righteousness. Every jot and tittle of the law had to be satisfied to make way for the true riches or covenant of Jesus Christ. Jesus was faithful in the unrighteous mammon, he acknowledged the claim of the law against his people as entirely just and true, and paid the whole account, not seeking to minimize it as did the unjust steward. Jesus is therefore the perfection of true and faithful service. a In order to come into that true riches which is his own, be rendered faithful service in the unrighteous or legal mammon. When a sinner is brought by the light of God's Holy Spirit to see himself guilty before God, he confesses the law to be just, and all its claims against him true. Now there are men in this world who call themselves servants of God who when they find one who really feels himself to be a sinner, and acknowledges the law's demands just and true, these servants tell such an one to not worry about his sins, that he is not such an awful sinner or debtor as he thinks he is, and that if he will do the best he can God will receive him and give him a receipt in full, though he makes only part payment. We say there are such men, and many of them in the world to-day, preaching what they call the gospel and serving what they call God, who tell sinners that they are not so deep in debt as they esteem themselves, thus robbing God of his just portion, or seeking to do so. These are the stewards (for so they profess to be) who seek to ingratiate themselves into favor with men by preaching a smooth and easy doctrine and denying or very much minimizing the sinner's debt to divine justice. These stewards, the wisdom (rich man) of this world commends. But that sinner who is brought naked and undone before the law confesses his utter indebtedness, and also his utter. Inability to pay, that one

makes to himself a friend of the unrighteous mammon. If a man owes another a debt, and even though he cannot pay it, yet comes to his creditor and acknowledges the debt and his desire to make it good, even though he cannot, that man makes a friend of his creditor, and wins his respect and compassion. But that man in debt who seeks through cunning and fraud to cheat his creditor out of his just due, brings down upon his head the relentless suspicion of his creditor, who will demand of him the very last cent. Therefore, said Jesus to his disciples, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." That is just what every disciple of Jesus does. They confess their entire sinfulness and depravity, and their utter inability to measure up to the requirements of the law, yet they acknowledge the entire justness and holiness of the law, and never seek to minimize its demand or to avoid its penalty. These thus make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Therefore, when they fail, as every such sinner will inevitably do, and be bankrupt before the law, then are such sinners received into the everlasting habitations, or dwelling-places, of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, into those many mansions in the Father's house prepared through the work of Jesus to receive those who have been faithful in the unrighteous mammon. To be faithful in any capacity requires faith, and to be faithful under the law requires that faith which is the gift of God and the fruit of his Spirit. So when this faith of God is implanted in a sinner's heart it makes him faithful in the unrighteous mammon, and brings him in the day of his failure into the everlasting dwelling-place of the gospel of Jesus. Unless he has this faith to be faithful under the law and all its requirements, he never can be faithful in that which is his own by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The reason why so many men belittle their sinful condition in which all are involved in Adam, is because they have never been given faith to see themselves the sinners they really

are, and the reason why so many so-called stewards rob God of his glory, and minimize man's indebtedness to that God, is because they, too, have not been given faith to understand the law and the dignity of God, and have not faith to separate law from gospel. Not having been faithful in that which is another man's (Moses'), how can they be faithful in the true riches (Christ's)? No servant can serve two masters (Moses and Christ), for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon [legalism]."

We hope brother McDonald will excuse us for not sooner complying with his request. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 10.
May 15, 1916

THE MACEDONIAN CRY.

"AND a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." – Acts xvi. 9.

We do believe there are such things as visions, that there are such things as dreams that have a spiritual value. Not to believe this would be to deny the Scriptures. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." – Job xxxiii. 15, 16. Paul was God's preacher. The Lord alone sought him out, called him by his grace and qualified him to preach the gospel of Jesus. Also, the Lord appointed him his field of labor and put him in it. This was not left optional with Paul, nor with the churches to whom he preached. At times Paul had desires and

inclinations to visit places where the Lord would not let him go, also he was compelled of the Lord to go into places where his natural bent would never have led him. We have such a case in this sixteenth chapter of the Acts. Having gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, he would have gone into Asia to preach, but the Holy Ghost forbade him to preach the word of God in Asia. Why, I do not know, and Paul did not know, only God knew, and he did not explain the matter to Paul. God never explains the "why" of anything. After Paul came to Mysia, he tried to go into Bithynia, but again the Spirit did not suffer him to do so. All the way along his pathway was hedged in, as had been that of his Master before him. We may devise our way, but the Lord alone can and does direct our steps. Then it was that Paul had this vision and saw a man who said to him, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." One way to test whether a preacher has been called of God to preach, or has called himself to, is to watch and see whether he goes against his will into places against his inclination, or whether he follows his own likes and dislikes and the lure of the largest congregations and the largest salaries. Some men proclaim loudly their zeal for the Lord of hosts and their concern for men's souls, but they take great care to be well paid for all the work they do. How long, think you, would such zeal endure should the dollar and its charms be withdrawn? To what kind of help was Paul called into Macedonia? Was he needed over there to help the Lord? Was there something in Macedonia that the Lord could not do without Paul's help? The man whom Paul saw in a vision did not say, Come over into Macedonia and help the Lord, but, " Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Who were the "us"? Was it the case-hardened sinners over there that needed Paul, was it the unregenerate and unrepentant that called to Paul for help? We have only to continue on reading down in this same sixteenth chapter of Acts to learn that God already had a people in Macedonia which he had chosen for himself,

whose hearts he had touched, and who, as being already his sheep, needed the preaching of the gospel. Paul did not go into Macedonia and invite a single soul to accept Christ, nor did he persuade a single one to become a christian. His preaching did not procure for God one more child in Macedonia than God already had there. But these in Macedonia who were already the Lord's people and whose hearts already were being exercised by the Spirit needed their joy helped, they needed comforting, they needed instruction "in" and not "for" righteousness. Preaching never instructs any one how to get righteousness, but it instructs in righteousness; that is, those who are already righteous in the Lord's righteousness. Following Paul in Macedonia, we find him in Philippi, a chief city there. He had not sent the city word of his coming beforehand, he had advertised himself in no way, he had mapped out no plan or itinerary, he had not arranged beforehand with the citizens of the city for a big tabernacle in which to preach, and had not required a previously guaranteed sum before making his advent there. In fact, Paul came into Macedonia unknown and unheralded. None but the Lord and himself knew he was there. Paul went and sat down by the riverside where it was the custom of the people to repair for prayer, and spake to the women that came out there. Now, among these women, was a woman from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple, named Lydia. This woman heard Paul preach. She heard him not only with her natural ears, but with her spiritual ears, with her faith. The reason she thus heard him was because the Lord had already opened her heart, already she worshiped God, otherwise the preaching could not have benefited her, and never can benefit any one only as the Lord opens their hearts. Following this case of Lydia, there was a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination. This maiden followed Paul. Paul did not invite her to follow him, he did not dog her steps, coaxing her to join his church; instead, the

woman followed him about listening to his preaching, and said, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. Paul did not tell her how to be saved, or what she must do to be saved, but he, as all gospel preachers do, showed the way of salvation; that is, he preached Jesus the way, the truth and the life. In the case of Lydia and this damsel, neither had been made to believe through Paul's efforts, but, God having wrought by faith in them, they recognized Paul as a servant of God and his preaching as a message sent from that God. Now, the third case in Macedonia was that of the jailer. This man, when he put Paul and Silas in jail and bound their feet in the stocks, rejoiced in doing so, not knowing that these men were the servants of the true God, and that they preached the truth of that God. But during the night this jailer had a revolutionary experience within himself, so that he was prepared to hear the preaching and to receive the message they bore. Paul and Silas had nothing to do with opening this man's heart or his eyes, the Lord alone could and did bring the earthquake that upset all the jailer's calculations and brought him in fear and trembling to the feet of Paul and Silas. This, then, was the kind of help required of Paul in Macedonia. He was not called there to help the Lord save souls, but to preach to those whom the Lord had already selected and saved, to help their joy and comfort them with comfortable words. He was not called there to purify the politics, nor the society of Macedonia, nor to help the prohibition ticket at the next election. If, in this day, these evangelists that run around the country saving souls went into a country to preach, and only three persons responded, and had to suffer arrest to reach one of these, they would give up their ministry as a failure, and go into something else promising better returns, but with the true servants of the Lord there can be no giving up nor backing out. There is no discharge in that war. Their faith is in God, and they abide in

the work until the Lord calls them home. This is written, not by request, but because we have felt like it. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 6.
March 15, 1916

MATTHEW XVI. 13-19.

MR. J. T. BRAND, of Lithonia, Ga., asks us about Matthew xvi. 13-19, especially as to what Christ meant by, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Also, what Christ meant by, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Jesus had asked Peter who the world said he (Jesus) was, and had received from him the reply that some said he was John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asked Peter, Who say ye that I am? Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then tells Peter how he (Peter) knows this, that he has not been taught it of men, but that it has been revealed unto him by the Father. Then, says Jesus, I say unto thee, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church," &c. Jesus does not mean here that he will build the church on Peter, for that would have been a weak foundation indeed, but that Jesus knows his sheep (as when he said, Thou art Peter), and his sheep know him (as when Peter said, Thou art the Christ, &c.). Upon this personal relationship of Jesus to every one of his sheep, and of every one of his sheep to him, rests the security of the church against all the gates of hell. There is no intermediary between Christ and his people, no need of any one to introduce the needy sinner to the Savior or to make known the Savior unto the needy one. This comes by revelation direct from God, and cannot be

overthrown so that it is a veritable rock upon which rests the church.

As to the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we have thought that this simply meant that the apostles were ordained to be judges of sound doctrine, sound faith and sound practice in the gospel church. The expression, “kingdom of heaven,” means the visible organization of the church here in the world. Jesus had said, Fear not, little flock, for it is my Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The little flock in this instance meant the twelve disciples afterward to be apostles in the gospel church. It was the pleasure of the Father to deliver through Christ unto this “little flock” the ordinances, doctrine and order of the gospel church for them to deliver to those believers afterward to be baptized by them. This is what was meant by the Father’s giving them the kingdom. The church in its gospel character came into visible manifestation on the day of Pentecost. The church of that early time received the doctrine and ordinances at the hands of the apostles, so that the apostles’ doctrine and order has from that day to this received divine sanction, and is the only rule still remaining to the church of doctrine and order. This is what we mean when we say that we believe the New Testament to be the only rule of faith and practice for the gospel church. The apostles, in this sense, did have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever they loosed unto the church in the way of doctrine and order and enjoined to be observed by the church we must observe, or else not claim to be the apostolic church. Whatever the apostles bound or prohibited the church from observing or preaching, we must still refrain from preaching or observing, or else not call ourselves the apostolic church. The apostles said nothing about Sunday-schools, missionaries, &c., therefore we, too, must be silent on these matters when it comes to advocating or practicing them. Whatever they bound on earth has the approval of heaven, and is bound

also in heaven. On the other hand, the apostle did command the observance of the Lord's supper, the ordinance of baptism, the ordination of elders, the preaching of the doctrine of salvation by grace, the refraining from all legalism in doctrine and in practice, and the abounding of charity among all believers. These things they did loose to the church, and we have no right now to cease advocating or practicing anything which they did preach and observe. In short, the evidence that the Old Baptists are the church of God in gospel order is that the Old Baptists walk in the doctrine, faith and practice in which the apostles walked. We must not add to nor' take from any of these things. In this way the apostles had the keys of the kingdom, and we do well when we hold fast those things which they loosed to us, and when we refrain from those things which they bound from or prohibited to us. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 11
June 1, 1916

MARK XVI. 17, 18.

"AND those signs shall follow them that believe: In my name * * * they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Our inquirer asks for an explanation of only one of the signs that follow them that believe. The Scripture recorded by Mark gives five signs that follow them that believe, but as our inquirer wants us to write especially of the one sign: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," we will not take up time and space in trying to write more than we are asked to write. first of all, belief in God the Father and his

Son Jesus Christ is never the work of the creature, it is the work of God. It is the effect of the power of the resurrection working in the soul. The power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power required to cause one to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Belief, thus powerfully produced, has certain results or signs that follow. One of these is that they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. Now, the twelve disciples were, by the working of this mighty power, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, certain signs followed these twelve disciples which gave evidence that these men had been with Jesus and were taught of him. One of these evidences or signs that followed these disciples was that they laid hands on the sick and they recovered. We have but to turn to the book of the Acts of the apostles to find recorded there many significant instances of healings wrought by the apostles, not in their own name, but in the name and authority of the Lord, who had called and qualified them unto the performance of these signs. Thus was the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple healed. Thus was Tabitha restored to life. Thus was it true that from the apostle's body, handkerchiefs and aprons were brought to the sick, diseases departed from them and evil spirits went out of them. All these signs the apostles performed not of themselves, but in the name of Jesus; and all these signs that followed them proved the power of Cod that was in them, thus giving evidence that they were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the question of importance to us to-day is, How does this sign now follow those who believe? There are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to-day just as there were then, and the belief is wrought precisely now as it was then, that is, by the same power that raised Christ from the dead. How then do those who believe in Christ in this day and generation lay hands on the sick and cause them to recover? first of all, we must say that we do not believe that this sign is literally true in this age of the world. It was

literally true of the apostles that they did heal diseases of the body by the power given them to do so; but the power is not now given to the church to heal bodily afflictions and diseases as it was then. However, there is a. sickness which none but a believer understands, and which the believer touches with the hand of his faith, and which sickness is assuaged by such touch. This is the sickness on account of sin. None but a believer understands the symptoms and cause of this sickness, none but a believer can sympathize with another who is thus sick. When one is sick of sin, it is a great comfort to find one who has had this dreadful malady, and the hands of whose faith is able to coolingly comfort and console the one thus sick. None but Jesus can apply the healing balm, and often he is pleased to do this in the ministry of his gospel, thus causing one believer to minister to another, to lay hands on the one that is sick. There are instances of christian experience where one has long labored under conviction for sin, long been burdened with the law's condemnation, long sick of sin, the worst of all diseases. In some cases it has pleased God to send relief to these sin-burdened souls in the preached word. When such has been the case, has not the believer preaching the word laid hands of faith on him that was sick, and did he not recover? Yea, verily, for the burden was gone and a newborn hope became that one's health and peace, begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Also, this matter may be looked at from another standpoint. Sometimes members of the church get sick, not physically, but spiritually. They seem to grow cold, their zeal flags, they get to staying away from the meetings and become wrapped up in the duties and cares of the world. Is not this sickness? However, when the members of the church have the mind and love not to give that one up, but to go after him, visit him, talk to him, continually showing that they love and fellowship that one, the Lord is pleased to restore that one to the fold, thus curing the

sickness of that one. Sickness means disease, and disease means out of ease or out of order. Every disorder in the walk and conversation of a child of God is a spiritual sickness. Often the manifestation on the part of our brethren that they love us at such times when we are sick, is enough to recover us from our sickness. We are all servants one of another, not in our name, but in the name of Jesus, and every ministration from one member of the body of Christ to another member of the body of Christ is the fruit of God's power in the members, is the sign that follows their belief in him, so that they are given to lay hands on one another and to recover them from unhealthful states. The child of God, the believer, does not exercise himself unto this ministration, but the power of salvation working in him exercises him unto all such ministrations, thus making our ministrations a sign that we do believe in him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. We know of one case where a brother in the church absented himself from the meetings of the church again and again and seemed to be growing spiritually cold. The other members of the church, because they loved this one sincerely, would not give him up to this coldness, but kept going to see him. Every time he missed a meeting, some of the brethren went to see why he was not there. They kept this up until this one who was staying away found that the only way to get rid of them and keep them from coming to pry him out was for him to go to the meetings. Thus he began going to the meetings again to avoid being compelled continually to give reasons for not going, and he found that the more he went the more he wanted to go, until finally he had no inclination not to go, but a strong desire to be at all the meetings and to be in the company of those who loved him and whom he loved, and who had not deserted him in the hour of his need. Here, it seems to us, is an instance where those who believed laid hands on him that was sick and he recovered. All the

ministration that was accomplished throughout this whole proceeding was by the grace of God effectually working in them that thus ministered. We cannot do these things of ourselves. If we did, it would be nothing but formality, and would do no good. It takes grace to serve God with reverence and fear, and we can only minister to one another in this way as grace is given us so to do. What a beautiful sight it is, however, when grace does thus effectually energize the members of the church unto the bearing of another's burdens in love, so fulfilling the law of Christ. He has given us the commandment that we love one another. This commandment he gives not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart, writes it in the mind, imprints it in the inward parts, so that it is not resting with God's people whether they will love one another or not, but they do love one another because the religion of Jesus is a vital principle, the blessed effect of Jesus' resurrection from the dead dwelling in his people. Nothing is grander than to see this wonderful power working in believers, causing signs to follow them that are the out- flowering of their belief. The aroma of pine forests is said to be beneficial in certain diseases of the body, but the fragrance of Jesus' name flowing out from his garden inclosed has cheered many a weary wanderer in his pilgrimage on the way home.

Written at the request of brother S. S. Taylor, of Mitchell, Arkansas. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 22.
November 15, 1916

MATTHEW II. 6.

"AND thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

When the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Herod was troubled by this rumor of the advent of a new king, for he himself was ruler over Judea, and regarded with extreme jealousy the claims of any one else to the throne. Therefore Herod assembled the chief priests and scribes and demanded of them where Christ should be born. That is, not being himself familiar with the literature of the Jews, and knowing well that the scribes and priests were familiar with the Jewish law and prophecies, Herod demanded of these learned men to tell him where, according to prophecy, the King of the Jews was to be born. In answer to this demand of Herod the authorities told him that Bethlehem was the place named in prophecy as the location of this new king's birth. Substantiating this, they referred to the prophecy of Micah, fifth chapter, second verse: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." So far as we know, Micah lived at the same time as Isaiah, about seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus. Thus, we see that at the distance of seven centuries Micah was inspired by the Holy Ghost to leave on record the name of the birthplace of the coming Messiah, one of the many biblical proofs of the inspiration of the Scriptures. None but a predestinating God could inspire his prophet with such exact information. It must needs be that a God able to make such declaration seven centuries before its fulfillment must be able to determine beforehand all events that should come to pass in that interval. Surely God, our God, does his will

among the inhabitants of the earth as well as in the army of heaven. Our text says that Bethlehem was not the least among the princes of Juda, and then gives the reason why Bethlehem was not the least: "For out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." The Lord's choice of Bethlehem as the place for Messiah to be born made Bethlehem great. Though not marked by any greatness within herself, the Lord's attitude toward her made her great. David said, in the day that God delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." David owed all his greatness, not to himself, but to the anointing which he had received of God. Paul owed his greatness, not to himself, but, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Thus, with Bethlehem, she was by no means least in the estimation of Jehovah, "for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." One of the titles of Jesus is "Governor," because he does govern spiritual Israel. Everything in the Israel of God is subject to the rule and direction of King Jesus. Jesus governs his people's faith, hope and love. He governs their walk and conversation, their doctrine and practice. He adds to the visible organization of his church here in the world such as shall be saved from the untoward generation without, he calls and qualifies whom he will to feed the sheep of his pasture. The rule of Jesus over his Israel, while gentle and permeated with loving-kindness, is nevertheless stern and inflexible as iron, for where the Lord once begins his good work, there is no lull until he brings it to successful issue in the day of Jesus Christ. One whom he calls unto belief must believe; one called to preach must preach; one called unto membership in the visible church must be baptized. The Lord's people are willing only as his power makes them willing. The work of grace brooks. no opposition, for while every child of God is at some time disobedient, even his disobedience is subject to the governance of the King in Zion,

and cannot ever frustrate the purpose or will of God. Whatever Jesus by his Spirit moves one to do or say that must be done or said, though often to the humiliation of one's carnal will and inclination. There is a crucifying of the flesh in every following of Jesus, a bearing of the cross in every following in his footsteps. Being crucified unto the world is no voluntary act of a spiritual Israelite, but an inevitable decree and manifestation of the iron rule of the Governor, Jesus Christ.

Written at the request of Mrs. M. I. Davie, of Fulton, Ky. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 23.
December 1, 1916

"WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE?" (MATTHEW XX. 6.)

THIS parable of the laborers in the vineyard, recorded in the twentieth chapter of Matthew, applies, we think, in direct connection with the conversation of Jesus and his disciples recorded in the nineteenth chapter. The beginning of the twentieth chapter is not the beginning of a new theme, but a continuation of the subject discoursed upon by Jesus in the chapter before. Let us glance at some things in the nineteenth chapter, that we may better arrive at the connection which furnishes a setting for this parable of the laborers in the vineyard. A rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked him: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus called his attention to the commandments of the law, but the young man said he had kept all these things from his youth up, "what lack I yet?" Then Jesus said, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou

shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." This young man then went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Turning to his disciples, Jesus then told them that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. This so astonished the disciples that they asked him, "Who then can be saved?" The reply of Jesus was, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Now, the fact that Jesus had told this young man to sell all his goods and come follow him (Jesus), and that he should have treasure in heaven, caused Peter to wonder what would be his reward, seeing he, too, had left all and followed Jesus. The natural mind in Peter told him he ought to have some reward for leaving all and following Jesus. The natural mind loves to be paid for all it does. Therefore Peter's thought was something like this: If Jesus promises this young man treasure in heaven when he has sold all his goods and given to the poor, surely we twelve who have been now following him some time, and have left all our goods, should' receive some compensation for the deprivations we have suffered. This thought of Peter's was shown in the manner he talked with Jesus: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" Jesus then said: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Here Jesus plainly told them that not simply were they twelve men to receive an hundredfold and to I have everlasting life, but that "every one" leaving all for Jesus' name should receive an hundredfold and inherit everlasting life. Every child of God saved by grace finds that the name of Jesus compels his separation from the world. It

is not a question as to whether God's people want to be separate from the world or not, the very work of grace in their hearts brings about this separation, so that God's people, while in the world, are not of it. Every child of God, whatever be his or her place in the body, is what he is by the grace of God, and all boasting is excluded, so that one cannot lord it over another, or set himself up above his brethren. Jesus followed this conversation in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew with the parable in the twentieth chapter, and the parable simply illustrates what Jesus has already said to them. Jesus showed the disciples that even though they had been with him all through his ministry, and had suffered persecution with him, thus bearing the burden in the heat of the day, yet they were not on that account to expect any greater reward or. pay than some humbler child and servant of God who might be called into the vineyard at a later time. Peter, though called to be an apostle of the Lamb, and given wonderful liberty to preach the gospel when Pentecost had fully come, was after all nothing but a sinner saved by grace, and thus no greater in himself than the thief on the cross, who also was a sinner saved by grace. Even though Peter had left all and followed Jesus, was that any credit to Peter? Peter had not done it in his own strength or according to his own will. Why, then, should he expect pay for what he had not and could not have done of himself? If grace had brought about this renunciation in Peter, and it was grace that had done it, then surely grace deserved the credit, and not Peter. It was carnal for Peter to say, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" And Jesus told him and the eleven that though they were ordained to occupy thrones of judgment in the "regeneration, yet every one that likewise was called to leave aught for the name of Jesus should receive an hundredfold in the gospel kingdom, so that these twelve were not to be able to boast over the least one in all the body of Christ. Jesus

likens the kingdom of heaven to a man that was an householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard, and when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. Afterward, this same householder went out at the third,sixth and ninth hours of the day and sent other laborers into his vineyard, promising them not a penny, but "whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." Now, Jesus speaks of himself here as a householder, and how beautiful that is. Jesus' house is the church, and he rules all things in his church, which is his house. Jesus, the spiritual householder, calls the laborers and sends them to work in his vineyard. The first laborers were hired very early in the morning and promised a penny. These first laborers are the twelve disciples whom Jesus called to follow him almost immediately upon the beginning of his public ministry; thus they were called very early in the morning of that day which Jesus spoke of as follows: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is yet day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Thus it was day while Jesus was in the world performing the work of salvation. It was early in this day of Jesus in the world when he called the twelve and promised them a penny; that is, that they should sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The others whom Jesus called during his ministry here were not promised thrones of judgment, but all the children of God are promised that whatsoever Jesus deems it best for each member of his family to have, that shall they have. In the end of the day all received the same, a penny. This does not mean that in the end all became apostles. No, but it takes the same grace to cause one to believe and walk in the apostles' doctrine as it did to enable them to teach it. It is just as much a gift when one cleaves with all his heart to what Peter preached, as it was a gift that enabled Peter to preach it, and in the end all the laborers in

the vineyard, no matter how long they had labored, were on the same plane and footing: all were what they were by divine calling, and not by any voluntary act of their own. Whether, like the twelve disciples, they had been with Jesus all through the heat of the day, or whether, like the thief on the cross, they came in at the eleventh hour, Jesus was the reward of each. He is his own reward, and each child of God finds full and perfect satisfaction in being with Jesus and clothed in his likeness. All owe their being and their labor to what Jesus has made them by his grace, and not to what they have made themselves. Now, it is particularly of those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour that we desire to write. The householder came into the market place at the eleventh hour and asked these, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Their answer was very simple: "Because no man hath hired us." How could they go before they were sent? They could not send themselves, could they? They could not force themselves into any vineyard, could not compel some man to employ their services. The question of the householder to these men was not a rebuke because they were idle, it was not a hint that should have been at work long before. No, it was none of this. The question of the householder simply brought out the reason why they were not working: "Because no man hath hired us." Surely they could not work unless they were engaged by the householder and sent by him into his vineyard. They had no right to enter his vineyard without being sent by him. Now, we have said before that this householder is Jesus. Jesus calls whom he will to labor in his vineyard, and none can labor in that vineyard until he calls them and sends them. They cannot but remain idle in this matter until the householder appears to them. Did any one ever hear of a vineyard hiring its own workmen? No, but the owner of the vineyard, the householder, must look after his vineyard and send into it laborers to dress and keep the vines. Just so Jesus the

householder must care. for his vineyard, the church. The church does not go out and hire laborers to come to her. She has no more power to do this than grapevines to get themselves looked after. The husbandman calls and sends into his church such laborers as he pleases to look after her. It is one characteristic of the true church of Jesus that she has never been able to manufacture her own ministers, but has ever been dependent upon the Lord Jesus to send his laborers into her. Until he does this, she must and does remain idle, waiting upon him. Also, the men whom Jesus chooses to labor in his vineyard have no power to send themselves, but must wait for the householder, Jesus, to find them and send them. For this reason, then, these eleventh hour servants remained idle in the market place; no man had yet hired them, been able to bring his little children into we do it? We have seen some members and they could not do else but remain where they were until the householder found them and sent them to the work. No school, college or any institution of men can turn out laborers for Jesus' vineyard. The church has no source of supply but in Jesus her head. Sometimes the Old Baptists get very anxious about who will preach to them when the ministers they have are gone, and often some restless spirit among them gets to advocating things we ought to do in order to keep ourselves from dying out. Will you please tell us what a grapevine can do to keep itself alive? Nothing. No more can God's people do anything of themselves. All their strength and all their keeping is in Jesus. He is their life and the health of their countenance. Often we get discouraged when we see the few laborers that are being called and sent into the vineyard, and when we see, perhaps, the members of the churches passing away and few coming in, yet what can we do about it? God is the only one who has ever been able to call and qualify a man to preach his gospel, and he has never disclosed to man the secret as to how he does it. How, then, shall we go about

making preachers? Also, Jesus is the only one who has ever the visible organization of the church, and he has never handed over to us his power of doing that. How, then, shall who have been brought into the church through persuasion of men, perhaps the pastor of the church, but such never make good, reliable, sound Baptists, and more often these are inclined to bring in false doctrines among us, and tear up the peace of the militant body. It is always best to wait for the Lord to send his laborers into the vineyard, and not try to do it ourselves. The old ark may look pretty shaky sometimes, but any effort on our part to steady it always results in condemnation. Whenever you try to mix grace with works there is sure to be death in the pot, and it makes God's little children sick. All our fruit must come from Jesus. He is the vine, we are the branches, and no branch can bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine. Without Jesus we can do nothing. We can work out our own salvation with fear and trembling only as God works in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure. They that wait upon the Lord are the only ones to whom is promised the renewing of strength. It is good to patiently wait upon the Lord, to stand still and see his salvation. Zion is a quiet habitation, her name is, "The Lord is there." He is to her a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein goeth no galley with oars, neither does gallant ship pass thereby. These eleventh hour laborers just as much filled their place in the vineyard as those sent into it early in the day. It takes just as much grace to labor in Christ's vineyard one day as it does a thousand days. Then why should Peter and the eleven expect any more reward for having left all and followed Jesus than any other child of God who might also be called in their order and measure to also forsake all for Jesus' sake? To all the reward is the same. It is not reckoned of debt, but of grace. Jesus is as much the reward of these that came in at the eleventh hour as he is the reward of those who labored all day. None of them

labored except by the calling and authority of the householder, therefore wherein was the right of the all-day laborers any more than the eleventh hour ones? When Paul shall stand before the face of God in glory, all he can say, notwithstanding his valiant fight as an apostle of the Lamb, shall be, I am a sinner saved by grace. This is the same song, no more and no less, that every child of God shall sing, whether his days here have been many or few, whether his labor has been long or short. There are no bigs and littles in the church of our God, but all are one in him, sinners all saved by grace, and if any one seems to have more ability to labor than another here in the vineyard, that ability is not of self, but of grace.

We have written upon this subject by request, and do not know that we have gotten at the kernel of the parable at all, but we hope, at least, we have stirred up the minds of God's people to think of these grand things. The SIGNS never has had, and never will have, any use for any other salvation than that which is by grace through the Lord Jesus Christ by the mercy of God the Father. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 21.
November 1, 1916

ISAIAH XXXIII. 19-21

"THOU shalt not see a fierce people; a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand."

The whole of this Scripture culled from the prophecy of Isaiah, of which we have here quoted the nineteenth verse, is the language of faith looking forward beyond the things

then seen to the things yet to be made manifest in the gospel heavens several hundred years from the time in which the prophet was then living. This is one of the many internal evidences found within the Bible that prove its being inspired from a source outside of man himself, for how else could the Old Testament be so full of prophecies accurately foretelling what should afterward come exactly to pass as foretold, except that the authorship of the Bible be in One who is endowed with infinite comprehension and absolute foreknowledge? Isaiah is enabled here by faith to look beyond the law and legal Israel to the kingdom of Christ, then in the future, and to the glorious position in which this gospel kingdom stands. Thus, in describing the inhabitants of this new kingdom, he says they are not a fierce people. fierceness, savagery, carnal bravado and courage, human boldness and egoism, are not characteristic of the new creature in Christ Jesus who lives in that Jerusalem from above, the mother of us all. On the other hand, humility and meekness, gentleness and peace and brotherly love are by grace infused into these regenerated subjects of the gospel kingdom, so that "thou shalt not see a fierce people." Right here, we must not confuse the visible organization of the gospel church with the church as it is in Spirit, which is the way Isaiah is having it revealed to him there. True, the church in its visi ble organization here in the world has always had its troubles and divisions, has at different times been troubled with men seeking their own ends, and having not an eye single to the glory of God. These contentions have at times waxed fierce, but we must remember that such contentions are of the flesh, and do not affect at all the quietude and humility of the church in the Spirit. However much the surface of the ocean of vital unity may be disturbed by storms and winds, its deep subterranean mysteries are all undisturbed and peaceful. This people dwelling in the new heavens at which the prophet is looking, is not of a deeper

speech than he can perceive, nor of a stammering tongue that cannot be understood. To be sure, the world cannot understand the language of the people of God, and to the wisdom of this world they do seem to stammer, but to those of like precious faith the speech of the spiritual rings clear as a bell, giving a certain sound, and that which the world calls stammering is eloquent with power to the spiritual ear.

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." The church is the city of the solemn things of the redeemed host. In the old, or typical Zion under the law, were the temple with all its furnishings fraught with such wonderful meaning and the priesthood of the Aaronic line, with all its vestments and incense, offerings and sacrifices, rituals and ceremonies. Here, in the temple, were the singers and the instruments of strings, the cornet and the organ. Here were the solemn feasts kept and the holy days observed. Here echoed and reechoed the songs of triumph when all went well, here resounded the plaints and walls when adversity overtook them. Here, too, in secrecy behind the vail in the temple was the holy of holies, where was the ark of the covenant upholding the seat of mercy overshadowed by cherubim, and containing the tables of the law, the pot of manna, and Aaron's budded rod. All these, and many other things, made the Zion of old a blessed and holy place to the Jew, and all these were shadows of things vastly more wonderful in the spiritual Zion, "the city of our solemnities," appearing to the faith of Isaiah. The church of God is a solemn place; not that it is especially a sad place, but a place filled with the reverence and adoration of the Highest, a place where all the transactions are in the Spirit, and have to do with eternal verities. This makes it a solemn place. Here dwells the Lamb of God, the one and only sacrifice for sin

which does not have to be offered every year, but was offered once in the end of that legal world to perfect forever those whom God had sanctified in his covenant of election before time began. The efficacy of this atonement pervades the whole solemn city. All the inhabitants are solemn, for they remember the pit whence they were digged and the rock whence they were hewn, so that with sorrow for sin they reverently contemplate the great price paid by their Redeemer for their safety eternally. This is not a temple made with hands, but a habitation builded through the Spirit for the honor and glory of God, a temple builded of living stones: sinners quickened through the operation of the Spirit and raised up together to sit in the heavenlies. From these living tabernacles arises unto God the sweet savor of Christ, the holy incense of prayer and praise kindled in the hearts of all the saints for his wonderful mercy to the children of men. This Zion of our God is a "quiet. habitation," for the dwellers therein are resting in the finished work of Jesus, observing that Sabbath day which shall never end. They have ceased from their works, as God did from his, and have entered into rest from all the labor of legalism which they were formerly so heavily laden with. There is no going about to save souls, for Jesus has done all that work, and finished it centuries ago. Nothing do these Zion-dwellers have to do but rest in his love. This is "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down." Under the old covenant, the tabernacle all through the wilderness had to be taken down and moved from place to place, its stakes had to be moved and its cords loosed, but that holy city coming down from God out of heaven, the new Jerusalem, shall never be taken down, it shall not fall nor decline. Its life is the same as the life of God, and as God cannot be moved, so shall not this city he moved, founded as it is in his immutable wills and shalls. Omnipotence upholds it, omnipresence secures it. The stakes shall never be moved. Paul says that whom God foreknew he also did

predestinate unto conformation to the image of his Son; whom he did predestinate them he also called, whom he called them he also justified, whom he justified them he also glorified. Here in a short sentence in his letter to the Romans Paul gives us the "stakes:" foreknowledge, predestination, effectual calling, justification and glorification. These stakes can never be removed. These eternal principles contingent upon God alone are too high for man to amend or to erase. Were the safety of the church contingent upon our doing this or that, were it hinged upon duties which we had to perform, it would not be a tabernacle not to be taken down, and it would certainly fall, for man has been nothing but a failure in himself from the beginning, and everything man has ever done has been a failure. But resident as it is in the eternal principles of God and his holiness, not one of the stakes shall ever be removed, nor shall any of the cords thereof be broken. Cords are used to fasten the tent to the stakes. There are certain cords which bind the "city of our solemnities " to the immovable stakes above mentioned. In other words, the experience of grace in the inhabitants furnishes the cord which binds them to the doctrine which furnishes the stakes. The doctrine of God our Savior never has any attraction for any one until that one has the experience of the doctrine within himself. Experience is the personal intercourse of God with the individual, and in this intercourse, which is through the operation of the Holy Spirit within the subject of grace, is revealed the doctrine of God. There can be no right knowledge of doctrine except through experience. This is the way (by experience) that God instructs his people and indoctrinates them in the principles of godliness. These cords shall never be broken. Nothing can ever prevent the communication of God with his people. Earthly intercourse is often interrupted. Death severs us from our friends, so that we cannot communicate with them (spiritualism notwithstanding), wars intervene and disturb

intercourse between nations, telephone and telegraph lines go wrong and no messages can be sent, but nothing can ever sever the cords that hold the Zion of our God, nothing can break or discontinue the intercourse of God with his people, the experimental work of the Spirit. Godly sorrow for sin, repentance, peace that passeth understanding, love shed abroad in the heart, faith, temperance, and so on, are all the experience of God's people. These things bring the doctrine home to them, these cords bind them to the stakes, and these cords cannot be broken.

"But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." The "glorious Lord" is the risen Lord, the resurrected Christ, the victorious conqueror of all the enemies of righteousness. The "glorious Lord" is the Lord at the right hand of God, the Lord that said to David's Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The risen Christ is a place of broad rivers and streams to the city of God. His life waters the city and makes it fruitful in every good word and work. Time and space forbid us to tell all that Christ's resurrection means to his people. Indeed, it is a river so broad that human language cannot adequately deal with it. By Christ's being glorified in his ascension unto the Father he becomes her glorious Lord. Thus is he Zion's living head, sending down to and through her the stream of his living word, which makes her clean every whit, and which blesses her with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. These heavenlies are, first, the nature of Christ; whereas she was in Adam made a partaker of the carnal nature, now by the life of her glorious Lord she is quickened from that death in Adam, and made a partaker of the divine nature, so that she bears about in her mortal body the dying of the Lord Jesus to make manifest the life of Christ, thus bearing the image of the heavenly. This being made a partaker of the very nature of Christ is the result of

being watered by her glorious Lord, watered with and in a living stream. Second, the life. The life this city lives is by the faith of the Son of God, old things are passed away and all things become new; and whereas in time past they walked according to the course of this world, and in the lusts and appetites of this world, now this city lives not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for the righteousness of the law is being fulfilled in her. Thus, is this a new life, a life spent in God's service and to his honor and glory. Third, relationship. Whereas in nature all relationship is sexual, and based on marriage, in the resurrection life there is no male or female, no marrying or giving in marriage, so that the relationships in this Zion of our God are all new, based on an entirely new foundation, that of the Spirit, so that instead of there being husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, aunts, uncles and cousins, all are brethren in Christ Jesus; only one husband there, and that is Jesus; only one bride there, and that is the church; only one father there, and that is God; only one mother there, and that is the new Jerusalem. Fourth, service. Every one in this new city is the servant of the other, all are servants one of another, no one lives to himself alone in this wonderful Zion and no one dies to himself alone, for as Jesus loved them and gave himself for them, so they do after his Spirit and in his likeness, because they love one another, serve one another, and inasmuch as they do it unto one of the least of these, they do it unto their Lord. fifth, suffering. These inhabitants are called not only to believe on Christ, but to suffer for his sake; the world hated him, and will hate these; they desire to live godly in Christ, and so they suffer persecution; they are crucified with Christ unto the world, and the world is crucified unto them. Sixth, inheritance. They have an inheritance not of this world, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for them. Seventh, future glory. The fullness is not here in time, but hereafter; the city waits for the adoption, to wit, the

redemption of “our” body. We have here just hastily noted seven heavenlies in which the Zion of God is blessed. A whole sermon could be preached from any one of them. We simply list these things here to try to show how the glorious or risen Lord is a place of broad rivers and streams to his church. Whereas in nature, streams flow into and help to swell a river, in grace, the river is first and the streams flow out from the river. Things in grace are the opposite of things in nature, so that it was said of the apostles: These are they that turn the world upside down.

We must not forget to mention those ministering gifts which the glorious Lord gives to the city for its edification and comfort. He gave apostles, pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists, helps, governments, &c., unto his church, and these are streams that flow from the one “place” (the glorious Lord), and these water the garden. No galley with ears is in these streams. No human instrumentality is employed here, none of the usual modes of travel or of transportation are in vogue in the city of God. The Spirit is the message-bearer binding all in one and communicating with each and all. No noise or evidence of the world’s commerce, of its hustle and bustle, of its rush and work, are seen upon the bosom of these placid streams. In olden times criminals used to be sentenced to serve a term in the galleys, so that the galleys were mostly manned by the condemned. This thought is doubtless in the mind of the writer here when he says: “Wherein shall go no galley with oars,” to convey the idea that in this Zion of God there is no condemnation, no convict serving a sentence, but all are the Lord’s freemen. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Also, “Neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.” None of the gallantry of earthly pride is in evidence here. No room here for the pride and boastfulness of men. All have become nothing that Christ may be all in , all. All glorying, if glory there be, is in the cross of Christ the Lord.

We have written this at the request of Mr. Walter F. Stafford, R. 1, Greenfield, Tenn., whom, we take it from his letter, is not a member of the Old School Baptist Church, but an inquirer after truth. This is a most beautiful portion of Scripture to have impressed upon the mind of any one, but especially so upon the mind of one as yet unbaptized. We believe if our friend is made to realize the force and beauty of this text, he will be so allured by the attractiveness of the "city of our solemnities" as not to be able to refrain from following his Lord and Savior in baptism. His letter to us breathes a sincere devotion to the truth, but he says it is not meant for publication. May the Lord be with him and guide him in the way of the ordinances of His house. Such thoughts as we have here written upon this text; in Isaiah are very meagre indeed, as they must necessarily be owing to limited space, but we hope our readers will be able to meditate beyond what we have written, and thus fill up the gaps. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 12.
June 15, 1916

MINISTERING GIFTS.

PREACHING is not the only spiritual gift bestowed within the church to serve and edify it. Ten gifts are named in the New Testament that are designed for the comfort and instruction of the body of Christ; these are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, miracles, healings, helps, governments, tongues. Each of these depends for its quality and exercise not upon the native ability of the individual upon whom it is bestowed, but upon the grace attending the measure of the gift of Christ in each member. But thirteen apostles are mentioned: the twelve to the Jews and the one,

Paul, to the Gentiles. We believe there will never be any more apostles. They were men raised up and peculiarly gifted to a certain end: the setting in order of the church organization of the gospel dispensation. To them were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This does not signify that they decided who should and who should not enter the kingdom of God, but they unlocked to the church certain principles of doctrine, of practice, of ordinances and of privileges, which they enjoined to be observed and contended for by the faithful in Christ Jesus. Also, they locked to the church or forbade the practice and advocating of certain other principles and practices. No man since their day has the right to add to, or take from, any other principles and practices which they did not enjoin, and still profess to be a preacher of the gospel and a servant of the household of faith. Should any man arise in this, or any other age, commanding to be observed and believed doctrines and procedures foreign to that of the apostolic order, "let him be accursed." See Galatians i. 8,9. The new testament prophet is not a foreteller, a forecaster of events to come, but one who forth tells or brings forth out of the Scriptures, and out of the experience of the believer, that which edifies, exhorts and comforts. See 1 Cor. xiv. 3. The Scriptures are not exactly clear as to just what is the work and gift of an evangelist. The word evangelist literally signifies a "good angel or messenger," therefore the bearer of good or glad tidings. An example of an evangelist is given us in Acts xxi. 8, in Philip of Caesarea. This Philip was one of the seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, who were appointed to look after the "business," the temporal concern, of the church in Jerusalem. It is generally supposed that these men were the first deacons, though the word "deacon " does not occur in Acts vi. It is certain, however, that they were not regarded as set apart to the ministry, but to "business," yet this fact did not prevent Philip's being an

evangelist. If these men were deacons, then the work of an evangelist can be as well done by a deacon as by a preacher; that is, the gift of an evangelist would not necessarily have to be that of a pastor or teacher. We judge that in preaching to the eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza,'Philip was doing the work of an evangelist. Therefore we conclude that the special gift of an evangelist is manifested in a disposition to search out the isolated and lonely ones, the destitute and inquiring ones, and declare the glad tidings of the blessed name of Jesus unto them. This Philip did to the eunuch. Such work may be laid upon a deacon by the impression of the Spirit as well as upon a pastor. A pastoral gift is something apart from a preaching gift. An able preacher is not always a good pastor, and an able pastor does not always make a good preacher. The word “pastor” signifies “shepherd.” A pastor is not content to simply preach to his flock, but feels impressed to live among them and with them, to partake with them of such things as they have; he feels inclined to visit them in their homes and everyday life, and thus to have the oversight of them. Anything that causes or brings them grief and sadness saddens him; that which lightens and rejoices them also lifts him up. The sick in body or soul, the poor and needy, those sorely tried, are his peculiar burden, ever in his heart and mind. A teacher is an expounder of the Scriptures. A preacher may preach a good sermon to the comfort and edification of his hearers and yet not expound his text, not tell what it means. A teacher may tell what a text means and yet not especially comfort them, though he will not fail to instruct them. The gifts of miracles and of tongues, we believe, were in exercise in the apostolic church, and we know of no instance where they are being exercised in the church to-day. The apostles performed miracles on the bodies of believers by the same power that Jesus did the same works while here in the flesh. Peter and John healed a lame man, as is told in Acts iii. Peter raised Tabitha to life, as

in Acts ix. Handkerchiefs and aprons from, Paul's body healed the sick and cast out evil spirits, as in Acts xix. This gift to perform literal miracles is not given the church at the present time, so far as we have any knowledge. Miracles, and plenty of them, are transpiring on every hand, but they are not physical, as in the days of the apostle, so we believe. The gift given unlearned men to speak in other than their native tongues was bestowed upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. There were in that congregation Jews out of every nation under heaven, all speaking different languages, but they heard the gospel that day each in his native tongue. This was the gift of tongues bestowed upon these who preached the gospel, which enabled them to declare the truth in the native languages of their hearers of different nationalities without having to learn those languages for themselves. Even in the church of that day diversities of tongues were not exercised unless an interpreter were present. No one could he edified unless he could understand what was being said. It is our belief that the gifts of miracles and of tongues are extinct in the church of the present day. Of course we might spiritualize these things and make them applicable to us now, but we do not care to do that in this article. It would cause us to digress into such a large field that we might not get back to our subject. The gifts of healings are manifested in effecting reconciliation between brethren who have fallen out with each other, in restoring those who walk disorderly, and in expounding the way of God more perfectly to those weak on some point, as did Aquila and Priscilla to Apollos. Helps are manifested in various ways, but always by the same Spirit as all these other gifts we have mentioned. There are those members we hear spoken of as being "such a help to the church." They may be a "help" financially if sufficiently blessed in this world's goods; they may be a "help" in their hospitality if given to keeping open house for the entertainment of their brethren. Then there are

those who “help” the church with their clearness of vision, their sound and wise advice and counsel in troublous times, their discernment between right and wrong methods of procedure in attending to church business or in administering discipline. In every church of our faith and order there are always those who attend all the meetings with constant regularity and promptness; the pastor can always count on these being present, he the weather and conditions what they may; these are a help to the church; and certainly a help to him whose lot it is to labor among them in word and doctrine. Many times they uphold his weak hands and confirm his feeble knees when the tempter is well-nigh too much for him. Then there is the gift of government. Not all pastors and preachers are good disciplinarians. Discipline is a special gift, and falls under the head of government. Discipline hinges on love, as does all church order. The church Where love and fellowship abound is the orderly church, and the good disciplinarian is he whose discipline is rarely seen on the surface, but is felt in the hearts and souls of his hearers. The disciplinarian is never a boss, a dictator. There is no room for such in the new testament church. None of these gifts mentioned are lords over God’s heritage, they dominate not the faith of the hearers. Paul said, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” Even the apostles counted themselves the servants of the church, not its lords and leaders. Leadership is all right for the world, but it will not endure in the church. Humility and not ambition must stamp the sincerity of the man of God. The religious world about us, as always, is ridden to death with priestcraft. We want none of it in the church. “He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant.” Whoever goes about aiming to straighten out church difficulties usually makes matters worse. One truly gifted to govern is rarely conscious of his ability, and does his most effective work innocently and unconsciously. In thinking

of these various gifts in the church, let it be borne in mind that whatever gift is bestowed upon each member of the church (and there is none but has some gift), it is the gift that exercises the member, and not the member that exercises the gift. The spiritual ability which is of grace, and which is a measure of Christ, we call a "gift," yet not only is this spiritual ability a gift, but the man himself is also a gift to the church. The Holy Ghost gave Paul to the church, and also endued him with an apostolic gift to serve the church, so both 'the man and his ability were gifts to the church. All these gifts are bestowed, not to wander about at random, but are sent into certain fields prescribed by the Head of the church, Christ. Sometimes the direct leading of the Spirit will show a man where his gift must go; at other times certain things in providence will so come to pass as to bring the gift and field of labor in conjunction with each other. Sometimes a man may try to exercise his gift where the Spirit will not let him, and failure results. Paul wanted to preach in Asia once, but the Holy Ghost forbade it; he tried to go to Bithynia once, but the same Spirit hindered. He was called to Macedonia a place he had not intended going. The circumstance of his arrest and imprisonment ultimately led to his preaching the gospel in Rome. Certain it is that the Lord never calls a man to preach but he always has something for that man to preach, and somebody for him to preach to. The Lord does nothing by halves. When he begins a work, he finishes it. He does not give one of his people any gift whatsoever and they have to advertise it; eyes and ears are given to discern it. Usually the church discerns the gift before the subject himself is aware that he has it. The evidence that one is called to preach is that he preaches; that one is called to help is that he helps; that one is called to heal is that he heals. No matter what one may say or profess to be, it is by his fruits he must be known. The court of the Lord, before which all these gifts are judged, is the church. The saints shall judge

angels. The church sees that this or that man has a gift to preach or to teach or to be a pastor, and so ordains him. She sees that this or that man is qualified for the deaconship, and so sets him apart. The man himself has nothing to do with it save to abide by the judgment of the church, and so serve in the capacity and with the ability given him of the Spirit. Happy are we if we can do so willingly, and if against our will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto us. The same gift is not intended to feed and comfort all alike. We are given a great diversity of gifts in the church to suit the diversity of experience found in the church. What comforts and instructs one may not do so to another. For this reason no one can tell a man where he ought to go or to whom he ought to preach. The stars are in the right hand of Him who is in the midst of the church, and he moves them about from place to place as it pleases him. Jesus Christ, who has ascended up on high to give these gifts, knows fully the character of each gift, and knows fully the character of those for whom it is intended, and he will in his own time and way bring the two together. Bringing the field to the laborer and the laborer to the field is not a matter of formality, but of vitality, and the relation of pastor to flock, or of any gift to its place, is a relationship that is as real and as vital as any other relationship which is ours while here on earth. The calling of a pastor by a church is never a matter to be conducted as a political campaign. Electioneering is entirely out of place, and ill consists with the spirituality of the church and of the matter at issue. A church in need of a pastor, deacon or other gift, does well to consider the matter carefully and prayerfully. Watch the leading of the hand of the Lord and the direction of his Spirit; they will never guide wrong. Our own schemes invariably lead astray. Uzza reaped death in trying to steady the ark, so do we always die when we try to do the Lord’s work or help him in it. The works of the flesh involve death, the works of the Spirit are life and

peace. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Written at the request of one, a brother in the ministry, who wishes his name withheld. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 24
December 15, 1914

THE NAIL.

“AND now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.” – Ezra ix. 8. “And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it.” – Isaiah xxii. 23-25,

The allusions to Christ throughout the Old Testament gleam as shafts of pure radiance illumining the long night of sin which enshrouded the world in its somber folds, never to be lifted from the time that Adam transgressed his Maker’s law until the Sun of Righteousness arose in the person of Christ issuing from the dead. Throughout that darkness from Adam

to Jesus, the path of that just One, Christ, was as the shining light shining more and more unto the perfect day of his gospel, destined to be onto all that believe, the power of God unto salvation. For seventy years Israel had sojourned captive in Babylon, involuntary exiles from the land of promise, consequent upon their disobedience to the law of God by his servant Moses. They learned by bitter hardness that the way of the transgressor is hard, that sin entails its own penalty and woe, that an evil tree cannot bring forth aught but corrupt fruit. The days of their captivity being fulfilled, there went forth a decree from Cyrus, king of Persia, whose spirit the Lord stirred in accordance with his word to Jeremiah a long time before, that the Jews should go forth from bondage to build again the temple of their God in Jerusalem in Judah. Forthwith, sheltered under the king's decree, went forth the remnant of Israel under their leader Zerubbabel. With mingled joy and mourning these laid the foundations of the second temple. Adversaries sought to hinder them in their work, and finally succeeded in having King Artaxerxes issue a decree suspending all operations. But his successor, Darius, affirmed the decree of Cyrus, commanding the work to go on, with the result that the house was finished amid great jubilation in the sixth year of Darius' reign. Following upon this work of Zerubbabel and his host, and some little time later, Ezra and his companions minded to go with him, not of constraint, but willingly, also went up to Jerusalem to set in order once more the law of Moses and all its ceremonies and rituals, its feasts and fasts, its offerings and sacrifices. Imagine Ezra's troubled soul upon learning when arrived at Jerusalem that his fellow Israelites, so soon escaped of captivity, had lost their separateness and were mingling in the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites. "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons;

so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass." The path of righteousness is indeed a difficult road, and it is hard for even God's children to maintain a life of integrity and sobriety in the midst of such manifold temptations. How true that those who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. In the midst of this falling away of the Israelites, Ezra and the little band with him stand as a miracle of grace, a living memorial unto the God who had manifested in them the sanctification of his Spirit. Ezra says, "Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel." Thus there were some who had the fear of God in them, that fear which is the hatred of evil, and which furnished a common impulse to gather together those of like experience. This remnant, then, mentioned by Ezra in the text we have quoted at the beginning, did not include all that came out of Babylon, for many of them went lusting after strange peoples. If we call those who came out of captivity a remnant, then we must speak of these gathered about Ezra with God's fear in them as the remnant of a remnant. It is of this remaining few that Ezra says, "Grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape," and by "escape" Ezra means not so much the getting clear of Babylon as the escaping the pollution that followed when the holy seed mingled themselves with the various "ites" about them. This pollution they had escaped, because God by his grace had left them a remnant. Even then, therefore, there was a remnant according to the election of grace which escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Ezra did not say, nor did he once think, that they had escaped pollution because they were naturally better or more virtuous than those who had corrupted themselves, but gave all the credit for the escape to the grace of God. This is the same old story, old yet ever new, told everywhere throughout holy

writ, “to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” How good, in such a time of dissipation and decline, to have that on which to hang or to depend. This dependence this remnant had, and it was given them by that same God who had granted them grace to escape. This dependence Ezra speaks of as a “nail.” “To give us a nail in his holy place.” The “holy place,” and the “sure place,” spoken of by Isaiah are one and the same. By the nail spoken of by both Ezra and Isaiah is meant Jesus. Jesus is the dependence of his people, they all hang upon him. Jesus is the “nail” in the holy place, and fastened in a “sure place.” This holy place, or sure place, is God’s predestination. There can be no surer place to drive a nail than in that place which God has predetermined, and nowhere else can it be driven. As a man, Jesus did not have the arranging of his own life, nor the directing of his own steps. The steps of his feet, the work of his hands, the words of his lips, were all foretold by prophets before . his advent, showing. fully that Jesus, his life and sufferings, death and victory, were all predestinated to be as they were, and could possibly be no other way. His way was inclosed with hewn stones, so that he could not get out. God made his chain heavy, no sorrow was ever beheld like unto his sorrow. He came to his end and there was none to help, no arm reached forth to his relief, none pitied him. Bowed in Gethsemane beneath his heavy. stroke, which was heavier than his groaning, he said, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But because he was fastened as a nail in a sure and holy place the cup could not pass except he drank it, so he said, “Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.” He, then, Jesus the crucified, is the nail fastened in the sure place, the nail in the holy place reserved by the grace of God to Ezra and the remnant with him. Upon this nail hang all the vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups to the vessels of flagons, upon him hang the offspring and the

issue. These vessels of small quantity (for there are no big ones in Christ, or hanging on him) range in measure from cups to flagons, but whatever be their measure, whether it be an apostle or only a little one of humbler measure, all depend on Christ, the nail, for whatever measure of grace they possess. Whatever fruit to God they bring forth also depends on this nail, on him hangs the offspring and the issue. The issues from death belong to him. Isaiah says there comes a time, "in that day," when the nail shall be removed, be cut down and fall. This means not the failure but the fulfillment of the predestination of God. Jesus, the nail, could {not die, that is, be removed, until all his work was done, until the salvation of all hanging on him was eternally secured. His life was cut off from the earth, the nail cut down, in that day that Jesus was crucified. He went on living, but in another sphere of existence. As far as the earth was concerned, he came to his end, the nail was removed, cut down and fell. The burden that was upon him was cut off. He carried the sins of all his people in his own body on the cross, but the shedding of his blood purged all these sins away, so that the burden was removed. However, Isaiah says that the burden was not so much the sins themselves as all the vessels of small quantity, from cups to flagons, the offspring and the issue. Now, we know that in a wonderful, mystical way, that no man can understand, that his people were in him while on the cross, in him when he lay in the tomb, in him when he arose from the dead. But while all this is gloriously true, it is also true that no living mortal can ever suffer what Jesus suffered, none can ever die the death he died. Therefore, it is true that Jesus came to his end alone, suffered alone and died alone, alone without even a realizing sense of the presence of his Father. Thus, the vessels which hung upon him I were cut off from this nail at the last. Not that Christ's elect will ever be eternally cut off from him, for nothing can ever separate them from the love of God which

is in Christ Jesus, but cut off from him in the sense that none could actually participate with him in the work of salvation which he alone could accomplish. Arminians say we are partners with Christ in the work of salvation, that we do our part and he does his part, thus working together to save our own and others' souls, but this the Bible will not prove. Christ is the whole of salvation for every one of his people. So while all the elect were, and are, and ever will be, in Christ, yet in accomplishing the work of salvation he did all the work, and no man was his helper. This is what is signified by the vessels which hung on the nail being cut off, "in that day" when the predestination of God was accomplished and Jesus died, thus removing the nail out of its place. He went beyond all and each of us into depths of humiliation and woe into which none will ever be called to go. As proof of this truth that Jesus was alone and his people unable to accompany him, we quote the following: "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me." – Isaiah lxiii. 3. "He shall come to his end, and none shall help him." – Daniel xi. 45. "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop." – Psalms cii. 7. "Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." – John xiii. 33. This Nail predestinated for the people of God is a glorious throne to his Father's house; that is, to the church. Jesus is not a glorious throne to any but his elect, so we should not be surprised nor indignant if others do not see the beauty in Jesus that we see in him. He is a glorious throne to us, because he is the seat of God's power and authority to usward. The church knows no lawgiver but Jesus, the living Head, our glorious throne. Ezra names four ways in which the grace of God was peculiarly manifested to him and the escaped remnant with him ; first, grace "to leave us a remnant to escape," of which we have already written; grace" to give us a nail in his holy place," of which we have also written; third, to "lighten our eyes;" fourth, to

“give us a little reviving in our bondage.” The lightening of the eyes is a figurative expression, meaning the giving of understanding. The law of Moses did not give understanding, but the commandment of the Lord does. “The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” – Psalms xix. 8. The commandment of the Lord is given by Jesus to his disciples, and was never given to the world at large. Here it is: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. This commandment of the Lord, which is love, is the enlightening of the eyes, it gives understanding to the simple. This law,, when written in the inward parts and put in the mind, opens the eyes of the understanding, spiritually, to comprehend spiritual things. Now we come to the fourth manifestation of the grace of God mentioned by Ezra: to “give us a little reviving in our bondage.” To be sure, the church to-day is not under bondage, as was Ezra and the men with him, who all were under the law, and bound to its mandates, still we of the gospel age have our bondage, too, as expressed by Paul: “Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body..” – Romans viii. 23. In this bondage, while in our earthly house of this tabernacle, all our reviving must proceed from the same grace as did the reviving of Ezra and his brethren in those days long ago amid the apostasy of Israel about them. What glorious revivals to the church here in the world as she travels along the wilderness way are those seasons of refreshing that come from the presence of the Lord, when Jesus comes to her, who before has been preached unto her. We believe in these heaven-sent revivals that come as the wind blowing where it lists, imbued with fragrance and power from the throne of God, but we want none of the man-made revivals, whose winds are laden with the miasma. of death from the marshes of filth and the swamps of sin.

Written at the request of sister Sarah E. Runkle, of Macomb, Illinois. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 9.

NEHUSHTAN.

"HE removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan." – 2 Kings xviii. 4.

Hezekiah's reign over Judah furnished a striking contrast to the reign of his father Ahaz before him. Ahaz had been a wicked king, a man evidently in whom the fear of the Lord was not. An instance of the truth that children do not always walk in the example of their fathers is Hezekiah, for whereas Ahaz delighted in heathen abominations and practices, his son Hezekiah upon succession to the throne at once manifested a great zeal for the house of the Lord and for the worship of God according to the divine direction given Moses. Among the first acts of King Hezekiah was the abo lition of idolatry; he removed the high places of idol worship, destroying the images, cutting down the groves, and even brake in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had made many years before to set upon a pole that time that God had sent fiery serpents among them. This brazen serpent, it seems, had been preserved by the Israelites perhaps as a memento or relic of that solemn incident in their journey through the wilderness. This brazen serpent the people of Judah during Ahaz's sinful reign had been worshiping, even burning incense to it. Hezekiah destroyed this serpent of

brass, calling it “Nehushtan,” which means a piece of brass. Hezekiah meant that this piece of brass was no more than any other piece of brass after it had served the purpose for which God had commanded it to be made, therefore it was not to be worshiped nor held in esteem any longer, and to do so was to worship an idol: a god out of brass. It is probable that at least seven hundred years separated the time that Moses made the serpent of brass in the wilderness as Israel was encompassing the land of Edom, and the time that King Hezekiah of Judah finally destroyed that serpent of brass. At the time that God had commanded Moses to make it there had been a necessity for it, but that necessity had long since past, so that to longer cherish it as an object of adoration was no better than any other form of idolatry. The Israelites had spoken against God and against Moses, saying, “Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? I for there is no bread, neither is there any Water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” Owing to the coming of this woe among them, the people besought Moses to pray to the Lord to take these serpents from among them. Moses did so, and the Lord said to him, “Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.” So Moses made a serpent of brass, not of fire, showing that Moses understood the Lord to mean “brazen” when he said “fiery.” The Lord’s words therefore are not always to be taken literally. This serpent Moses put upon a pole, and any man bitten by a serpent, and who beheld the serpent of brass, lived. It is our view that these fiery serpents represented the sting of death, which is sin. The brazen serpent upon a pole represented Jesus on the tree “made sin for us.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” Now this brazen

serpent had no healing power , in and of itself, but the faith of those who looked upon it did the healing. By faith they were healed. The serpent of brass was merely a. symbol of their faith, and pointed to the Savior who should come in the end of that Jewish world to be made sin for them, to take from death its sting and to deliver from the power of death those who all their lifetime had been subject to bondage. This faith, then, was the healing power that wrought in the ones bitten to behold the brazen serpent upon the pole, and the serpent of brass was simply a concomitant of that faith. It is easy, very easy, for us poor, finite creatures (and so, too, for the Israelites of old) to substitute the visible for the invisible, to worship that which we see and not the power we cannot see. God himself is infinite, eternal and incomprehensible. No wonder then that we who are finite, of the dust and full of vanity, cannot arise to a proper conception of divinity so as to, out of our natural equipment, worship God as he ought to be worshiped: in spirit, not in matter; in truth, not in error. God says that his ways and his thoughts are as far above our ways and our thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth. This being so, man is forever helplessly unable with any of his natural powers to think the thoughts of the infinite God and to harmonize himself with the ways of godliness. Nevertheless man is naturally a religious being, though not by nature inclined to that religion which is pure and undefiled in the sight of God. Man, every man, we think, worships something. All men have a natural idea or standard of what they consider excellent or worth having and worthy of their struggles and devotion. Of course, this ideal is as much carnal as any other part of the natural man, notwithstanding it is a god to him. Some worship money, some fame or honor among men; some worship intellectual superiority, some the power of will or the will to power. Some crave a moral righteousness, others a fancied righteousness that will win them the favor off God. All these are gods to the ones that

pant after them. Thus civilization compasses its heathen in its complex structure as well as the African wilderness wild shelters its heathen in its jungle-tangled fastnesses, for the self-professed christian who worships an imaginary god of moral and intellectual worth is no more worshiping the true and living God in Spirit and in truth than is the dark skinned ignoramus who crooks his knee to an idol carved from tree trunks or rocks. The natural religion of man leads him always to worship or to seek a god that lies within his own conception of what a god ought to be, but the true worship of God instilled by God-given faith in a man leads that one to seek the God who all the time is above his comprehension, and whose ways are too mysterious to be fathomed. It is contrary to nature for man to worship something he cannot apprehend either with his senses, his intellect or his will. Only by the working of that Power higher than man can one ever rise to right thoughts of God. God must think his thoughts in us before we can think them back to him again. However, when one has had a remarkable spiritual experience in connection with some visible object or place, one easily drifts gradually into always associating that place or object with the attendant spiritual experience, and proneness is to thoughtlessly substitute the place or object for the experience, and to place too much value upon the visible accompaniment of the experience instead of upon the experience itself. For example, the Israelites had a wonderful deliverance in connection with this serpent of brass, so wonderful that they always associated that deliverance with the serpent of brass, instead of with the incarnate Savior whom it prefigured and who was invisible to them. They lost sight of the substance in the shadow, worshiping the image instead of the Power behind the image. The serpent of brass was no more than any other piece of brass, as Hezekiah knew, so he destroyed it in disgust at his people's shallowness, saying,"Nehushtan," it is a piece of brass. "Ye

shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God." Here is forbidden in the law of God the making of any image to worshiped. Suffice it to say that our imaginations are capable of graving images the tablets of the mind, and to worship even these mental conceptions is as much idolatry in the sight of God as to worship something external to us and tangible. Further, we are commanded not to make "any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above" to bow down unto or to serve. Therefore to picture God, or Christ, or the saints in heaven, to represent them, either in statuary, or on canvas, or in the stuff that dreams are made of, so as to worship them, is idolatry. God, or Christ, or any of the heavenly host, cannot be pictured either with chisel, with brush or pencil, nor in our thoughts and imaginations, for how can He who is eternal, infinite, invisible and incomprehensible be transferred and transfixed in a medium that is material, finite and unstable? Thus it is that being so carnal and earth-bound as we are, and as the Judeans of old were also, whenever God reveals himself to us in any way, at a certain place and at a certain time, we invariably treasure in our recollection that time and that place which accompanied the revelation rather than the truth of God that was made manifest to us there. So did the Judeans of old degenerate unto the worship of the piece of brass instead of worshiping the Power signified by it. The bride in the Song of Solomon came unto the watchman seeking him whom her soul loved, but not until she passed a little beyond the watchman did she find him. God places his watchmen upon the walls of Zion, but we derive no comfort from the watchman until our faith looks beyond the visible man to the invisible Beloved behind him. Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter and worshiped him, but Peter quickly commanded him, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." Here we see in

Cornelius that ignorance which was in the Judeans of Hezekiah's day, that lack of knowledge which impelled him to worship the message-bearer instead of the Power behind. The same thing is instanced in Rev. xxii. 8, 9: "And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." It is not to be wondered at that John felt inclined to worship the angel which had shown him such wonderful things, nevertheless John's impulse was wrong, God alone is to be worshiped by his people, and no image must intrude between them and himself. John said to his brethren, My little children, keep yourselves from idols, and Paul said, My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. Now, the crux of the whole subject is, how is idolatry cured? We have seen how we are every one carnally disposed to substitute the seen for the unseen and to worship the tangible. What is the cure? Hezekiah abolished the idolatry of the Judeans in his day. "Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth, before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered." What a sublime summary of this man's reign inspiration here gives us. Hezekiah has been dead for centuries, but a greater than Hezekiah, our risen and victorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is now among us by his Holy Spirit, though unseen to mortal capacities. Faith sees him always near. The risen Christ is the spiritual Hezekiah. As Hezekiah of old set his house in order, which house was Judah, so infinitely more has Christ set his house in order, whose house are we "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Zerubbabel was the name of the captain of the Lord's host who led the

children of Israel out of captivity in Babylon back to their own land again. The name "Zerubbabel" means destroyer of idolatry, or of confusion. Jesus is the real, the antitypical, destroyer of idol worship. He, by his Spirit operating in the believer's heart, casts down every evil imagination and every thought that exalts itself against God. The only way not to be a heathen is to be by grace under the operation of the Spirit of Christ, which fulfills in us, "Thou shalt have no other 'gods before me." We do not believe that any one can of himself for even a single moment fix his faith's eye on divinity to the utter exclusion of all images and literal conceptions, they will intrude themselves in spite of all we can do. But whenever Jesus Christ exalts himself graciously in our hearts, we then are clothed and in our right mind at his feet, saved from our demented and distorted visions of him prior thereto. We then appear in glory with him, see him as he is, and are like him for a little while. These periods of spiritual lucidity and sanity, seldom though they are, are all that make this earth-wilderness blossom as the rose. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 20.
October 15, 1916

May 1, 1916

ONE HOUSE – MANY MANSIONS.

SISTER S. A. Culey, of Warren, Ohio, requests our views on John xiv. 1, 2, desiring to know what is meant by the "mansions" and by the expression of Jesus: "If it were not so, I would have told you." These verses read thus: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I

would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." This fourteenth chapter of John is closely connected with the thirteenth, and unless one notices carefully the closing verses of the thirteenth chapter he cannot but miss much of the beauty and fitness of the opening words of the fourteenth. The division of the Bible into chapters was devised by man for his own convenience, and very often these divisions break into the theme of a discourse and interrupt its continuity. If one will read the latter part of the thirteenth chapter and the first of the fourteenth as though there were no chapter division, he may at once see much that never occurred to him before. Peter said he was willing to lay down his life for Jesus, which proved his zeal, but proved also that Peter was then ignorant of his own insufficiency and shortcomings. Jesus replied to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." However much this may be calculated to alarm the disciples, Jesus follows up his prophecy of Peter's failure with, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Luke records this somewhat differently, but the same in substance: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Peter himself was to fail in order to realize the weakness of his flesh, but through the intercession of this "priest after the order of Melchisedec," the faith of Peter should not fail. No matter how weak in the flesh God's people are, nor how much failure they realize in themselves, there is no failure of their faith, hence their security. It is by the power of God through faith that they are kept unto salvation. This faith is not theirs to take up or lay down at will, but is the gift of God to them, and or this gift to his people God never repents; that is, he never takes it away from one within whom he ever implants it. Jesus tells Peter and the others with him that they believe in God and now commands them to also believe in him; that believing not only in God, but also in the God made flesh, Jesus, their troubled heart will find peace. To

confirm this, read the twenty-seventh verse of this same chapter. The peace that passeth all understanding is the gift of Jesus to his afflicted people, and when given it delivers their troubled heart from the fear of man, the flesh, and from the fear of death, the banishment and separation from God. There is a period in the experience of every subject of grace when he believes in God, but has no view of Jesus. This is when under the law, convicted of sin before a just and holy God, but, as yet, with no relief from his burden, with no hope of salvation in Christ. Such an one believes in God. He believes God to be almighty, great, good, just and infinitely holy. As for God being love and full of mercy, able to justify the ungodly, the stricken sinner sees not how such could be. He realizes the austerity of God, and that he is perfect in knowledge, power and justice, but the kindlier side of Deity, his compassionate attributes, he does not see or realize. Consequently his heart is sore troubled, with no relief' in sight, with no possible way of escape open for one who feels deserving of the vengeance of an outraged law, even though its penalty involves his being sent to hell. The position of Peter and the other disciples at the time the words of our text were spoken, was much the same as that of one experimentally under the law. Being under the law, the victory of Christ was not actually accomplished, and was not understood by them. They loved him without knowing why they did so, without comprehending his true character, not understanding the necessity for his humiliation, sufferings and death. They had a kind of hope in him, but it did not become a "lively hope" until after his resurrection from the dead and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. When the command of Jesus is trumpeted in the soul, saying, "Believe also in me," then darkness and sorrow flee away, hope springs up and the tongue breaks forth in singing. To be brought to believe in Jesus, is to believe with all the heart that he is the Way through which the mercy, loving-kindness,

compassion and salvation of the just, holy and almighty God come personally to the poor, wretched, miserable sinner at the end of the earth. To be told when he felt so sure of himself that within so short a time he would deny Jesus three times, was enough to make Peter feel that should he do so he would deserve to be forever excluded from the presence of God without mercy; but the assurance of Jesus is that even though the fall of Peter he realized, it should not be permanent, nor prevent his salvation for, "Believe also in me," he says, which assures the disciples that though weak in themselves, he is their salvation and will eternally be their security, the assurance of their preservation unto final glory.

"In my Father's house," that is, in the church, are many "mansions," or dwellings, places of residence for those who are saved in the Lord. We know from the Scriptures that the church is the residence of God, the place where he in Spirit dwells, the habitation of his honor and glory. However, from the reading of our text and from the context in which it is found, we do not think that Jesus is meaning to present in this instance that the church is the residence of God, though that is absolutely true, but he is saying that in the church are many mansions, or dwellings, places where the inhabitants of the city themselves live, and that he is going away through suffering and death to prepare one of these places for Peter, even though Peter is to deny him. The denial of Peter will not at all change the attitude of Jesus toward him, nor the love of Jesus for him, nor his purpose concerning him. "If it were not so, I would have told you." That is, If I had changed my mind about you, Peter, I would have told you. If Peter's failure in himself had operated to defeat the purpose of God in regard to him, Jesus would have apprised him of that fact. If by his denial of Jesus he had forfeited his mansion, or place in the church, the Head of the church would have told him so. These are not mansions in the skies, of which the Bible says nothing, but mansions in the Father's house, the

church, of which the Scriptures say much. The works of God as Creator are seen in the material creation of the whole universe, and of the worlds upon worlds it contains. The material world may he said to be the house of the Creator, but it is not the house of the Fatherhood. God as Father is revealed in the church. The church is the house of the Fatherhood of God, the place of those born of the Spirit, made partakers of the divine nature. The mansions in the church are the places in which the members of the body live. Each has his own place prepared for him, and no other one can fill each place than the one for whom it is fitted. The members are placed in the body as it pleases the Head of the church. The members themselves are not consulted in this matter, are not asked to choose the place they would like assigned to them. Jesus designates the mansions of Peter and the eleven in Matthew xix. 28, where he declares that in the regeneration, by which he does not here mean the new birth, but that in the new order of things following after the resurrection of Christ from the dead and from the establishment in the earth of the spiritual kingdom of God, or gospel church, these twelve that followed him in the days of his humiliation, were, in the Father's house, to occupy thrones of judgment. The apostolic gift and office was to be the mansion of each of the twelve in the gospel church. None ever filled these places or lived in these mansions but those twelve who were promised them and prepared for them. These same apostles are apostles now. There never will be any more apostles. Though they as men. are gone, their judgment and authority still preside in the gospel church in all matters touching its doctrine, faith and practice. After being promised a throne of judgment, then to be told that he would deny Christ three times, was liable to cause Peter to question, not only the purpose of God concerning him, but also his own fitness for the place. But any question as to the immutability of God is quieted when Jesus declares the

mansion to still be there, despite Peter's weakness, and that if his frailty had deterred God from his purpose Jesus would have told him. That. which prepared these mansions or dwelling-places for the people of God, was the going away of Jesus into death and his ascension to glory. The Comforter would not come except he go away. Except by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the work of the Comforter in taking the things of Jesus and showing them unto us, and in leading us in the way of all truth, could not be accomplished. The death and resurrection of Jesus, his going away, are the groundwork supporting the whole fabric of the church, the rock upon which every mansion in it is solidly built. Every gift, office, place or position occupied by each and every member of the church of Christ receives its power and efficiency from the fact that Jesus died, arose and ascended at the right hand of the majesty on high. They are evidences that the resurrection is an assured reality. The gifts and offices in the church are many. Some named in the Scriptures are apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, deacons, miracles, healings, helps, governments and diversities of tongues. No two have the same gift; no one can (ill the other's place; each has his own mansion fitted for him, and be for it, by the going away of Jesus; that is, by his departure from earth for glory, because had not the corn of wheat fallen into the ground and died it should have dwelt alone. When any member of the church of Christ is enabled to enjoy his or her mansion, or place in it, he can truly say it is the only life worth living, that all else is dung and dross. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 17.
September 1, 1914

PRAYER

MOST people believe prayer to be an imparting of information to the Almighty that the Almighty is guided by the petition of men, that God waits to hear what men would have him do before he does it. If this be what prayer is, then it must do away with the foreknowledge of God, and with his predestination, because if the Almighty is guided in what he does by what men petition him to do, he could not arrange the events of time beforehand, inasmuch as the sequence of things would hinge upon what men would desire to have done. The truth is, that such an idea of prayer as is generally held is exceedingly belittling to the dignity of God, and carries with it no idea of the true character of God and the exceeding greatness of his majestic power. The prayers of God's people (for no others ever really pray) influence God not at all, nor are they of any benefit to God, but every prayer experienced by the child of God is for the welfare and comfort of the one who prays. But some will say, If God be all-powerful and has fixed unchangeably in his purpose and decree all things whatsoever come to pass before they do come to pass, then what is the use of prayer? It seems to the natural mind that predestination does away with the necessity of prayer. Instead of this, however, predestination is the very backbone of prayer, for it is not worth while for any poor, trembling sinner to pray to any but a predestinating God. Only that God who works all things after the counsel of his own will can be the resource of the tried and tempest-tossed soul. Prayer is not a matter that can be done or not done according to whether one feels like it or not. As to whether we shall or shall not pray is not left with us to decide, but prayer is the result of the Holy Spirit's operation in the child of grace, and exercises that child to seek divine favor, so that prayer is not something that we can exercise at pleasure, but is that which exercises the

subject of grace whenever and wherever God wills. Even the apostle Paul confessed that he could not pray, that he did not know what to pray for, except as the Spirit itself made intercession for him. Including himself with the church of Rome, and all believers, he says: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Thus, this matter of prayer is no easier for a believer, not even an apostle, to do of themselves any more than it is possible for the sinner unregenerate to do it of himself. Whenever one really prays he does so as the result of the Holy Spirit's intercession within himself. Inasmuch as God has decreed all things that shall ever come to pass, it is therefore certain that no petition will be answered that asks aught but what God's will has ordained shall be. Any prayer claiming to be prayer that asks for other than God's will to be done is not prayer at all. Whenever we follow our own natural inclinations in this matter, and ask for those things we naturally crave, it is not prayer at all, but is asking amiss. Only that which the Spirit inspires one to ask is worthy of the name of prayer. It is a comfort to know that even the apostle Paul himself, able as he was in the exposition of the deep things of God, yet felt unable to pray for anything of himself, and realized the need of the Holy Spirit within him to lead him aright in this matter. Surely no one but the Spirit could be better or equally qualified to lead the saints aright in prayer, for, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Since the Spirit searches the hearts of men, the Spirit therefore knows the need of every child of God. Also, the Spirit searches even the deep things of God, so that the deep things of election and of God's eternal purpose and will are all known to the Spirit. Since, therefore, the Spirit knows what is in God's mind toward each of his chosen, and since that Spirit also searches

the heart of that chosen one, what better than this Holy Spirit can cause the believer to ask in accord with what it is God's will to bestow upon that one? The substance of all prayer in sincerity is, "Thy will be done." It may not be just in those exact words, or it may be in no words at all, but the theme of all true praying is submission to the will of God, for prayer does not consist in words, but in Spirit. It is not the words one uses, or does not use, that constitute prayer, but the Spirit that prompts the desire counts for prayer; the desire itself is the prayer, and not the words which express that desire. Christ told his disciples that they were not heard for their much speaking, it was not their words that counted with God, but the Spirit which actuated them. Sometimes we hear good brethren lament because they are unable to talk, and thus express themselves as they would wish upon spiritual things, but better than all the talking in the world, better than all the gifts of language, is it to have in the soul that sincere longing and desire toward God and the things of God. This desire it is which is the exercise of the Spirit in the believer causing him to draw nigh the seat of mercy to petition there for those things which it is God's will to bestow. All the blessings that all believers will ever enjoy here in time were treasured in Christ for them by the Almighty before the world began. All the prayers experienced by the people of God will never add one blessing to those already prepared for them; but, on the other hand, the Spirit causes the believer to ask for these very blessings which God has prepared from eternity for him and which God has predestinated him to enjoy. We have seen indulgent parents who lavished gifts on their children until they became satiated with them. A little child with several. handsome and expensive dolls does not enjoy them nearly so much as some little poor child with its one rag doll. The one child has never known the need nor deprivation of playthings, and therefore is not prepared by that need to appreciate her blessings as is

that other child who clings so tenderly to its one mute playmate of rags. God does not satiate his people with his goodness and the bestowal of unnumbered blessings. He is too wise for that. Though he has innumerable good things treasured for them in Christ from eternity, yet not one single blessing does God ever bestow upon his children until they have been brought into such an experience of need as qualifies them to enjoy and appreciate the blessing when it comes. This need, or lack, felt in the soul of the believer is the Spirit's preparation therein for the goodness of God, and this feeling of need, this desire for the goodness and salvation which God alone can give, is prayer. Thus it will be seen that prayer does not change God's mind at all, for he is of one mind and none can turn him, neither does prayer ask for anything but what God has already determined to give. We would define prayer as that operation of the Holy Spirit within the believer through which he is brought into reconciliation with the divine will and made to desire those very things which God has decreed to bestow. Therefore, instead of prayer being something by which we bring God around to our way of thinking and to our point of view, it brings the believer into a godly attitude of mind, to think the. thoughts of God and to crave his works. No bounds can he set by us to this matter of prayer. We cannot set times and seasons for it. We cannot say that we will pray every day, or several times a day, or even that we will pray at all, as all this is entirely dependent upon God's will and upon the leading and instruction of his Spirit within us. Whenever it is his pleasure to cause us to know our need of him, then we shall pray, and shall do so without ceasing. True, Paul did say, "Pray without ceasing," but he did not mean that we" could do this of ourselves. In these words found in 1 Thess. v. 17, Paul is addressing the church as a body and not as individuals, and we do verily believe that the church as a body never ceases to pray. As individuals, there may be, and

doubtless are, times when we each have not the spirit of prayer, and therefore do not pray, but it is sure that from the church somewhere there does at all times ascend unto the Father the incense of prayer perfectly and sincerely rendered. None but the praying of the righteous man avails anything. Jesus Christ is the only righteous man we have ever known. None others ever are or can be righteous, only as the righteousness of Christ is imputed unto them. The petitions of Christ avail with God, because they are effectual and fervent. They are effectual because they are the fruit of the Spirit's inspiration, and are therefore in harmony with the decreed purposes of God. They are fervent, burning, because there is no halfway or lnkewarmness in this effectual prayer, but the whole substance of Christ is involved in it, so that when the believer prays he is made to feel that his whole soul and all his welfare is wrapped up in the petition, so that this makes it fervent, for his whole being burns within him as he earnestly petitions the throne of grace for that which the Spirit makes him feel he cannot do without. The posture of the body does not constitute prayer. Of what avail is it to put the body in an attitude of subjection when one's inmost soul is standing up defiantly. No, prayer is not a matter of bodily attitude, but is a matter of heart. In prayer one's soul is in humility before God, no matter where one's body may be. Neither does a form of words, however sound, constitute prayer. The prayer may be a groan that cannot be expressed, that cannot find expression in human language. Somehow we have been so impressed with prayer as being a matter so real, so vital to the well-being of a child of God, that we have felt to write these few thoughts upon it, hoping it may comfort some one somewhere. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 11
June 1, 1916

PROVERBS XVII. 17.

"A Friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

The Proverbs of Solomon have, to an extent, become household words throughout the English speaking world. Even among worldly men they are treasured for the wealth of wisdom which they contain merely as regards the dealings of men one with another, in the every day walks of life. If then worldly men so respect these Proverbs from a natural point of view merely, how much more would the subject of grace be amazed and lost in admiration should he be given light to see beneath the mere letter of the word and behold Jesus written in every line. Every passage of Scripture from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, when rightly understood, resolves itself into this: "Jesus Christ and him crucified." If we should interpret it to mean anything but this, we could not say with Paul, "I speak the truth in Christ and lie not." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." No part of the Scriptures is useless. Each part has its place in the thorough furnishing of a man of God to all good works. Equally profitable is the Proverb quoted at the beginning, when taken by the Spirit and revealed, thus awakening our understanding of heavenly things and spiritual exercises. When rightly seen, it will be in harmony with christian experience, and if not harmonious therewith, cannot be received as truth by a child of God. "To the law and to the

testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

"A friend loveth at all times." Behold a man surrounded by wealth, luxury and all that money can afford. To such a one come scores of his fellows cloaked in the garb of friendship. The word "friend "to them is but a tool to win his approbation, and to assist themselves to selfish ends. Now, see that man stripped of all his wealth, hurled into abject poverty. How many of his fellows come to him now! None. Why should they! No benefits can be obtained from one who himself is in need of beneficence. Are these men his friends? Surely not. "A friend loveth at all times." No matter where I am, what I am, or how I am, a *true* friend will always follow me to strengthen me when weak, to lift when fallen, to cheer when faint and to counsel when rash. Though I be poverty-stricken, a *true* friend will never leave me. He is not expecting reward or benefits in return, but he loves me as his own soul; my interests are his, his welfare is mine. Though I go in the ways of the wicked and become as vile as the vilest criminal, he does not forsake me; no, he still loves me. Where I am, there is he to assist and lead me from evil. What say you? Was there ever such a friendship as this between man and man? Surely a *true* friend does love us at all times, but does *true* friendship exist between men? No. That between Jonathan and David in days of old comes nearer to the mark than any. Should I persist in evil doing until men thought me deranged, how many friends would I have! I can safely answer, none. Not a subject of grace but can remember a time when the world smiled blandly on them. Self-satisfaction reigned supreme, but one day, while drinking deep from the cup of sinful pleasures, a drop of bitterness entered the bowl. Your peace of mind was disturbed. It gradually increased until the poison had spread throughout the whole man; it grasped him body, soul and spirit; sin was reigning unto death; you were a reproach to

yourself; your goodness, uprightness and chastity, where were they? Alas, search where you would, you could not find them, they were gone. Were there none to help, to rescue from this plague of sin? No, not one. Then surely we must die. You once had lots of friends in your own righteousness, your own strength, your own wisdom. Why do you not go to them now? Well, you would, but where are they? Gone. No help from that source can ever come. You see yourself as "having no hope and without God in the world." But hark! What heavenly sounds are these! "Come unto me and I will give you rest." Ah, here is the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." None other than God himself who now reveals the way of salvation to the weary and helpless, ordained for such through the merits of his only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *True* friendship is found nowhere but with God himself. Where once he bestows his love, it is unto the end and throughout eternity. If I ascend to the third heaven, he is there, and if I make my bed in hell, there is he. Surely he is a friend indeed, for he "loveth at all times."

"A brother is born for adversity." "Adversity" directly implies "opposition," and subsequently "poverty," or "straitened circumstances." In reading the eventful history of national Israel, one sees "adversity" or "opposition" written in every line. They were a stiffnecked, rebellious people, continually disobeying the commandments of God. When plagued and vexed on account of disobedience, they would be brought to repentance for a season, but only for a time. They could not remain steadfast in well doing, for their feet must slip and plunge them headlong in wickedness until the hand of the Lord laid heavily upon them would cause them to turn again, for he had declared, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." As he hath said, so brings he it to pass, and in the end, however far they may have strayed, Israel

had always to appeal to him for deliverance, and to say, "Thou only art God, and beside thee there is no Savior."

All this is typical of the members of spiritual Israel. Man at his best is but vanity. Every imagination of a man's heart is only evil continually. The whole human race is in a state of "adversity" or "opposition" to God and his laws. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Every thought, every act, in fact all that we do, is in direct opposition ('adversity") to the ways of him whose ways are not our ways, and whose thoughts are not ours. They are as contrary as day and night. Only when the light of the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, can a sinner realize that he is in a state of "adversity"or "opposition" to God. Then he sees that obedience to God's law is necessary to effect a reconciliation between himself and God. Straightway he begins to work, but instead of becoming reconciled to God, he finds he is only drifting farther and farther away, and sees more and more clearly the opposition between sin and holiness, humanity and divinity. Eternal condemnation hovers over him unless he can obey the righteous law of holiness. This, he finds at last he cannot do. Poverty-stricken in his adversity, he comes to the end of the earth, and can only stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. In such a strait as this, and only in such, God, the Almighty Friend, reveals to us the "brother born for adversity," in the person of Christ. He becomes the Captain of our salvation. In him, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." In his birth, sufferings, death and resurrection, he reconciled his people chosen in him, to God. Our adversity (opposition) is removed. No more "opposition," but unity through the blood of Christ, our elder Brother. Various are the ways by which God makes himself known to his people. It may be as a Father, Husband, Friend, Prophet, Priest or King, yet it is always the same God viewed in different relations. Christ is the firstborn among

many brethren, and as their elder Brother, he leads them along through all the varying scenes of their earthly pilgrimage. Where necessary he imparts instruction to them from his infinite wisdom, administers reproof to the wayward, rebukes the evil doer, and visits chastisement upon the wicked. When he finds a little brother failing from sheer weakness, he makes him to lean upon his stronger arm, for he is touched with a sense of our very infirmities. Here another brother is becoming exalted above measure, and glories in his own fancied strength. Him the elder Brother suddenly deprives of assistance, and lo, he falls because his very mainstay is gone; he cannot stand alone. For this was the elder Brother born: that he might raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind. What a wonderful gift to "adversity!"

Like looking along the path of a sunbeam until one beholds the dazzling brilliancy of the sun, so is this subject of the friendship of God and the brotherhood of Christ the more I pursue it, so I leave it. Finity can follow infinity no farther.

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 69, No. 21.
NOVEMBER 1, 1901.

PROVERBS XXV. 11.

"A Word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

While journeying through Samaria our Savior comes to Jacob's well. The disciples have gone for meat. Seeing . a woman at the well about to draw water, Jesus asks a drink at her hands. She stands aghast at such a request, for, seeing he is a Jew, she knows it to be an unusual thing for one of

that race to ask anything of a Samaritan. Thus she reminds him, but he replies, “If thou kuowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.” Thus begins a remarkable conversation between our Lord and this adulterous woman. In it he reveals himself to her as the Christ, the Messiah which was to come. At the close the woman runs away joyfully to her companions exclaiming. “Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ!” Yes, this poor, miserable woman has seen the Savior, and knows that he it is who speaks to her. His words to her are “fitly spoken.”

Shifting the scene, we behold the gate of the temple, Beautiful, at Jerusalem. Hither come a number of men bearing one whom they lay at the entrance. This man has been lame from his birth, and never able to walk a step, and is placed here daily to receive alms of those who pass by. Peter and John, two disciples of the Lord, approach him. He begs an alms of them. They have none, but say, “Look upon us,” and then follow these remarkable words, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” Immediately he is healed, leaps up and goes with them into the temple, leaping and praising, not the disciples, but God. Their words were “fitly spoken.”

Let us glance at one more scene. Before us is the road leading out of Jerusalem toward Damascus. Down it came a company of men headed by Saul of Tarsus. Look at him. He has left Jerusalem with letters admitting him into Damascus. One of the most remarkable men of his day, he is skilled in the law of his fathers and in the wisdom of the east. Dominating him is a fierce hatred of the followers of Christ. The purpose of his journey to Damascus is to persecute this people, and to bring them captives to Jerusalem. He verily believes he is doing God’s service, and breathing out

slaughters and threatenings against the disciples of the Lord, goes forward. Suddenly a dazzling light from heaven shines round about him. He falls to the earth, and to him a voice speaks, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me!” Astonished, he cries, “Who art thou, Lord?” “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” Humbled, ashamed and groveling in the dust, this once haughty man implores, “What wilt thou have me to do!” “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” In Damascus we find him preaching the gospel he hated to the very ones he had intended to persecute. What has wrought this wondrous change! “A word fitly spoken.”

In these instances which I have cited, Christ either directly or through his servants has given the fitly spoken word. “The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” It is the tidings of that salvation which God has wrought for his people in his Son Jesus Christ. These tidings may be spoken directly to us by God himself, in our sleeping or in our waking hours, while at work or at rest, while reading or while in meditation. It may come through an earthen vessel such as all of God’s servants are, but not necessarily so. Most emphatically the preaching of the word is not essential to give one a knowledge of Christ or his salvation. But no matter in what way it comes, the gospel of Christ is a “word fitly spoken.” In it is embraced the doctrine of God, that doctrine which Moses declares shall drop as the rain and distill as the dew upon the tender herb and upon the grass. “Upon the tender herb,” which is a conscience made tender by the application of the law. To such a one the tidings of salvation are certainly words fitly spoken. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” &c. This word is Christ, the word “fitly spoken.” It is “fitly spoken “because peculiarly adapted or fitted to the needs and conditions of those to whom it is declared. In your lost condition, who found you! In your

blindness, who restored your sight! In your sin-sickness, who healed you! In your darkness, who brought the light! The answer is one word, Christ. That word revealed with power is our salvation from all the wretched conditions that befall us. Then is it not a word spoken with fitness! I do not hesitate to say that no other word under heaven is ever "fitly spoken "but the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But how is the gospel like "apples of gold in pictures of silver!" A picture all one color would be a barren monotony. Picture a wide expanse of ocean in a dead calm, with not a sail or a ruffle to mar its peacefulness. What weary, monotonous waste it is! Just so would be a picture of silver. It may be valuable, but it certainly is not beautiful. One color never yet made a beautiful picture. But what a change is wrought when "apples of gold "are painted in it! How it sparkles in its lustre, and how clearly the yellowness of the gold stands forth displayed on a background of silver. Black will appear blacker if placed next to white. So will gold appear brighter when placed in contrast with silver. This picture of apples of gold in silver is a picture which typifies the lives of the saints. Take out of your experience the seasons of rejoicing you have had when in the Savior's presence, and what have you left! Only sorrow, pain, affliction, darkness and tribulations of every description. This, dear child of God, is the background of silver. The "apples of gold "are the high and bright places in your experience when you have been drawn away from the world for a time and have rested alone in the arms of the dear Redeemer. They are seasons of rejoicing and gladness you have had when the word spoken in your heart lifted you out of the horrible pit and set you upon a rock, and put a new song in your mouth, even praise to our God. "Apples" implies sweetness. Truly these are sweet times. They are also a fruit. So are these happy days the fruit or the result of many days in darkness and tribulation. Without these "apples of gold," these "words

fitly spoken," our lives would be but as trees without fruit. With them the lives of the saints are pictures beautiful, rich and rare.

H. H. LEFFERTS.
22 N. Fourth St., Camden, N. J.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 69, No. 18.
SEPTEMBER 15, 1901.

PSALMS LXXXIV. 11, I2.

"FOR the Lord is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

It is by request that we attempt to take hold of this portion of Scripture, and to write upon it, not knowing whether what we shall be led to say will be of any benefit to any one. We think the key of this text lies in the expression, "Them that walk uprightly." Who is it that walks uprightly? The Psalms, as well as all other portions of the Old Testament, have for their main object to testify of Jesus: his life, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory. This is especially true of the Scripture we have taken under consideration here. Christ is the upright, man, and they only are upright who are in him, and who, through him, are raised above the power and dominion of sin, and above the condemnation of the law God made man upright, but he did not remain upright. Adam fell from his uprightness and became prostrate under the sentence of God's holy law. All the children of Adam are alike fallen in sin. All remain in sin except those who are made upright in Christ and through the power of his resurrection. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are

in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Not one of us is able to walk uprightly before God in Adam. It is only as we are in Christ that we obtain any uprightness in the sight of God. That which man considers upright is often mistaken as being acceptable in the sight of God, but men can never be any judges as to what is right in God's sight. Let us walk ever so uprightly in the eyes of the world, that does not say that our uprightness is the kind that God approves. In order to be approved in the God's sight we must be accepted in the Beloved. It is not a question of whether we accept God, but whether God has made us accepted in Christ. Since, then, Jesus is the key of our text, as he must be of every text if we are to declare the truth, it follows that no good thing will God withhold from them who are in Christ Jesus, that to them God is a sun and a shield, and that to them he will give grace and glory. The Lord God is a sun to his people, he is their light, their understanding, and they walk in the light of this understanding, which the Lord God sheds within their hearts and souls. He is the light of his holy city, the church, so that no sun by day is needed there, nor any moon by night, for there is no night there. The reason there is no night there is because the church is no more under the law (the night dispensation), but under grace. In our article a month ago we tried to write on this subject of "light." We cannot write more now than we wrote then upon this subject. We tried to show at that time how the Lord God is the sun of his people. But he is also a shield to them. This shows him as their protector. The shield, in olden times, was held between the warrior and the enemy. The darts of the assailers fell upon the shield, leaving the warrior himself unharmed. How wonderfully this shows what the Lord is to his people, in that all the temptations of the adversary were hurled at the people of God, but were caught by the Lord God, who, in the person of Jesus, stood between his people and all danger, receiving in himself all their afflictions,

and bearing in himself the penalty of all their transgressions. The angel of his presence is ever about those who fear his name. Nothing shall hurt nor destroy one single one for whom Christ died. For them he has taken from death its sting and from the grave its victory, so they do not even need to fear what the last enemy may do to them. The gifts of the Lord to his people are grace and glory. The text says he gives them. If he gives them, then they do not earn them. If they receive them as the reward of their merit, then they are not gifts. Anything that one pays for, and which comes as the reward of service rendered, is not a gift. The grace and glory of God are bestowed upon his people as wholly free and unmerited gifts through Jesus Christ the Lord. This is the grace, or free favor of God, in which our salvation for time and eternity is all bound up. The glory which he gives is that glory which Christ had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and which Jesus prayed to the Father his people might enjoy with him as the outcome of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Then, in the last verse under consideration, we see the expression, "O Lord of hosts." "Hosts" means an immense number, a great multitude. God is the Lord of a great multitude, which no man can number. The "hosts " are those, an innumerable company, redeemed unto God by the blood of his Son, out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue and people under heaven. As a holy benediction comes the conclusion of the Psalm: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." To have that trust and confidence in God which is alone the product of God-given faith is to have that treasure laid up above, where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break in unto and steal. We cannot tell any one how to trust in the Lord, and it is not possible, we think, for one to tell another how to do this. It is easy to trust him when God gives us faith to trust him, but it is impossible to bring about that trust of ourselves. One

essential to trusting in the Lord is that all confidence in self must be destroyed. Not until the flesh and sense and self have betrayed us, and shown themselves as no longer worthy of our trust and confidence, will we turn therefrom by the grace of God unto that perfect trust in God which nothing but grace can bring about in us. It is infinitely blessed for a poor sinner to have this trust in God, for it is a perfect trust, which can never be betrayed. All of us, perhaps, have had friends who have failed us in times when we most needed friends, but here is One that sticketh closer than a brother, a rich and almighty Friend; he is not slack concerning his promises toward us, who has promised to be with his people always, even unto the end of the world, and beyond. Those who trust in Him are founded upon a rock; like Mount Zion they shall never be moved, nor ever be ashamed. We are made ashamed of those among men in whom we have misplaced confidence. Never shall God's people be ashamed for their trust in him. He is our strong tower and rock of defence, a very present help in trouble. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 8
April 15, 1919

REMEMBER THY CREATOR.

MRS. Rachel White, of Southampton, Pa., asked us a long time ago to write on the words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," found in Ecclesiastes, last chapter, first verse. We have not meant to slight her request, but our mind has not been led to take up the subject, so could not do it. Even now we feel we know very little about the real import of the text,

but such as we have we freely give. We have never felt that the book of Ecclesiastes was as intensely spiritual as some other portions of the written word, but that it has a spiritual significance we have not the slightest doubt. Generally believed to have been written by Solomon as the first words of the book indicate, " The Words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," the keynote of the entire twelve chapters is struck in the opening language, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? Thus does the preacher announce at the outset his text, and all that follows is an opening up of all contained in those few words. The word "vanity" in Ecclesiastes means much more than merely foolish pride; it expresses the hollow emptiness of all life apart from God. To be born, to toil, to suffer, to experience some fleeting joy, to leave it all, to die, such is the sum total of all mortal existence. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is there such stress laid on the uselessness of all human effort, such emphatic assertion of the vanity of the attempts of man to dignity his existence. Seldom does the writer strike a cheerful note, and only now and then does a glimpse of gospel truth shine through the preacher's View of things as he portrays them from the viewpoint of the law, for the book of Ecclesiastes certainly expresses the experience of one under the law who realizes his exceeding sinfulness, his extreme emptiness of all good, the utter uselessness of all his efforts. A person in a state of nature, unconvicted, uncondemned, cannot look out upon life as does Solomon here. "Remember now thy Creator" is often addressed to young people by worldly religionists to impress them to "get religion," to "join some church" while they are young. It is generally believed that in youth impressions are more easily and more lastingly made than in later years, and, therefore, the time to come out on "the Lord's side " is while one is young. There is no such thing in reality as one's

getting religion, either in youth or age. Religion is a vital force or principle sent from God through the Lord Jesus that gets hold of sinners in the work of salvation, and they have not the least to do with getting hold of it. Besides, the infirmities of age make it no harder for the Holy Ghost to do its work, any more than the impressionable period of youth makes it at all easier. The idea that the Spirit of God cannot work its will in a sinner at one time as well as another, or that the attitude of the sinner is a help or hindrance to that work, involves the idea that God is not omnipotent, that he is limited in his power, and cannot accomplish his will without our help. Such doctrine will not stand the test of the inspired record, and will not do for those who desire and love the truth. There is no comfort in it. We believe that "Remember now thy Creator" realizes its fullest and completest fulfillment in the life on earth of Jesus. He said the Scriptures testified of him, and this text is included in the law and the prophets to which he had reference. Jesus, in all his life and sufferings, confessed it to be his meat and drink to do the will of the Father, and to finish his work. Everything he did and said was in remembrance of him who sent him into the world to ransom the church from sin and death. Jesus loved and served God with his whole heart, mind and strength; he was entirely consecrated to him, entirely swallowed up in devotion to him. No one of us can ever remember the Creator of ourselves. Only through Christ, who did it himself, can such righteousness be fulfilled in us, and when this work of Christ is manifested in our experience, then is the time of love, of youth; then the winter is gone, the rain is over, spring is at hand, the birds sing. Then, in the day of one's spiritual youth, when one first receives hope in the mercy of God, is the Creator remembered. Not yet have the evil days come, not yet the years in which we have no pleasure, not yet is the grasshopper become a burden, nor yet the daughters of music brought low and the mourners going

about the streets. In one's spiritual youth, in the days of our first love, when the very face of nature seemed rejoicing with us in praise to God, we could not believe that we ever should grieve, that we would ever be the victim of unbelief, doubt and faithlessness. When the Lord brought the Israelites up out of the Red Sea to witness the destruction of their enemies behind them, it was easy to sing then in the days of their youth, The Lord "hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Also, it was not hard to praise him when under Joshua's leadership they came up from the Jordan into the promised land. O those were glorious days when the Lord went before them in battle and did all their fighting for them, giving them victory over all opposition, and finally, rest. But how dark the picture later on when Israel grew cold and neglectful toward her God, unmindful of her blessings, forsaking her privileges in Zion and went a whoring after the gods and ways of the heathen, rearing temples to Baal in their groves and on the summits of their high places. Surely now the evil days have come upon her, days when she needs to be stirred up to remember the Creator in the days of her youth, to remember how it was with her in days agone. None but the great Preacher of all preachers, the one supreme Ecclesiast, by his Holy Spirit can awaken and stir up her love and cause her to be ashamed for all her ways. Now, in the evil days, days when she does not feel like singing, when even the littlest thing is a burden, she looks back to the days of her youth, and says with Job, "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle." Even Solomon himself was not exempt from this falling away. When he ascended the throne in his youth he wanted not wealth, honor, fame or glory, but just wisdom that he might rule Israel justly, wisely and well. In the days

of his youth wisdom seemed the principal thing, therefore he desired to get wisdom. B11t, alas, his declining years tell a different tale. “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father.” May it not be that Solomon had himself in mind then, as well as the apostasy of others, when he said, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth”? If he was a child of God, which we thoroughly believe he was, he could not help but look back to the days of his youth now when the evil days had overtaken him. Indeed, brethren, if we had not our youth to look back to, the time: of our first love, when we first received a hope, what would become of us? But for that hope we would not have the slightest glimmer to light us through the darkness, and would sink in despair. From our observation, it appears to us there is a general coldness and indifference enwrapping the visible church at this present time all over the country, and we are by no means exempt from it ourself. May the good Lord in his mercy stir up our pure minds to remember our Creator in the days of our youth, and stir us up to return to the first works such as were before these evil days came, in which we have no pleasure. L

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 20
October 14, 1914

REVELATION XIII. 8.

"AND all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

John saw a beast rise up out of the sea (the peoples of the earth). This beast had seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. This beast was like a leopard, his feet were as of a bear, his mouth as of a lion. The beast received his power from the dragon, also his seat and his authority. We have no doubt but that there was given John here a vision of the rise and development of antichrist, of all nations, societies and organizations that, while perhaps professing godliness, are the deadly enemies of all real religion, of the pure and undefiled religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have not the ability to analyze this beast in detail, and to tell exactly what each of the seven heads signified, and each of the ten horns, and so on. It is said that one of these heads was, as it were, wounded to death. We believe this one head that seemed to be thus wounded was the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, which received such a serious wound at the time of the Protestant reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Luther, Calvin, John Huss and others revolted against the teachings of Catholicism and the supremacy of the pope. During this period there was a great mental and perhaps spiritual awakening in the minds of many men; learning, which had been confined to the nuns and monks, became more widely diffused among the people, owing to the invention of the art of printing and the translation of the Scriptures into native tongues of the various peoples, instead of being procurable only in Latin or Greek, which had been heretofore the case, so that none but

the highly educated had been able to read the Bible up to that time. The result of all this was that Catholicism received a terrible wound, in that the pope lost his temporal power, and became a prisoner, practically, in the Vatican at Rome, which has remained the case ever since. At first it seemed that this wound was deadly, and that Catholicism would never be the power that it had been. Events since have, however, proved that Catholicism is resilient, and has continued to grow by leaps and bounds, so that at the present day there is no telling in what channels and to what extent the ramifications and influence of its power do extend. The whole of the world's thought and religion is tainted with Romanism, either consciously or unconsciously. But we must remember that the beast which John saw had ten heads, so that Catholicism is only one of these heads, it is but a part of the beast, and not the whole beast. The whole beast taken together represents the whole of antichrist, the whole of all that is opposed to the truth of God as it is in Jesus Christ. Protestantism, which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries revolted against Romanism, is to-day in league with Catholicism, not at all frightened by her doctrines, as it professed to be at that time. The whole world, Catholics and Protestants, too, has gone mad after the beast, all wonder after him and worship him. You do not hear to-day men arguing about the doctrines which this and that denomination stand for. The time was when Presbyterians meant one thing, when Methodists stood for something else, when Episcopalians held themselves aloof and would have nothing to do with either, but now not one person in a hundred who is a member of those denominations could tell intelligently what are the respective tenets of the churches to which they belong. Protestantism has ceased protesting, it has lost its backbone, and is as soft and yielding as a jellyfish. All this makes the steady encroachment of Catholicism upon our cherished liberties so much the easier, and so it will continue

to go on and on until too late to remedy it, then look out for the bitterest persecution this planet has ever seen. While men talk and weep about the universal brotherhood of man, the wily beast with his greed and selfishness and cunning is carefully getting the upper hand. The end of it will be that there will not be left a single one but what will worship this beast, except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. This Lamb, our text says, has been slain from the foundation of the world. Always and ever the Lamb of God, wherever he has seen fit to show himself, has met with the bitterest hatred and persecution. Satan opposed him in the garden of Eden when he enticed Eve to disbelieve what God had told her. Cain hated the Lamb in Abel and slew his brother. The antediluvians opposed Noah, Egypt sought to entrap Moses and keep him her servant forever, the Canaanites cost the Israelites many a hard fight, David had his Saul, Judah had her Babylon, the Jews hated Jesus, and so on and so on. Ever the Lamb of God has been slain from the foundation of the world whenever his sincerity and truth have shown themselves. Thus it will ever be until all prophecy and all Scripture and every word of God have been fulfilled. Our text states it as a certainty that all that dwell upon the earth shall worship error in some form or another, except God's elect, those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. These, and these alone, shall, worship the only true and living God in spirit and in truth. It is just as much a certainty that the whole world shall go after the beast as it is that these, the elect, shall cleave unto the Lord. Between the two, the elect and the wicked, is a great gulf which cannot be bridged. It is a fixed gulf, fixed by God's foreknowledge and his predestinated purpose, as well as his electing love. All who have been saved, and all who are still to be experimentally saved, were saved in the mind and purpose of God before time began. This number cannot be added or subtracted by men or devils or angels whatsoever. God alone

could change it, and he will not, because, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Written at the request of Mrs. J. D. Lake, of Hurricane, West Virginia. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 6.
March 15, 1916

REVELATION II. 27.

“AND he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”

This promise recorded here is made to him that overcometh and that keepeth the Spirit’s work unto the end. This overcoming one is Jesus. No one ever overcomes evil or keeps the Spirit’s work unto the end except those in whom Jesus lives, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. The church in Thyratira was plagued with false doctrine within it. This false way was to be overcome. The only way it could be overcome was for the overcoming of Jesus to be manifested in those who were to overcome it. This overcoming, therefore, would make manifest the precious and the vile and separate between them. In this church in Thyratira was a remnant according to the election of grace, and this election was to be revealed in those composing the remnant being given the overcoming ability of Jesus to discern between the false and the true, and to be separated from the false unto the true. Thus, whether it is Paul or any other man that overcomes error, in the last analysis it is always Jesus. He is the overcoming one always, no matter in what subject of his

power the overcoming is manifested. To Jesus, therefore, and not to Paul, or any one else, was given power over the nations. Jesus said after his resurrection from the dead, All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me. Therefore by his resurrection from the dead he is declared to be the Son of God with power. The reason why Christ is given power over all flesh is that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him. It was necessary for him to have power over all flesh in order for him to effectively enliven those that were his by election. Only by having power over the nonelect could he reach the elect. Thus, to say that God predestinates everything connected with the salvation of his people, and nothing else, is but half a truth, since that expression infers there are some things not connected with the salvation of God's people, whereas everything that comes to pass everywhere, and at any time, is somehow or other working for the good of the elect, and for God's declarative glory. Thus the authority of the overcoming Jesus extends over all the nations, being given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. We are told in this book of Revelation that God has a people among all the kindreds, tribes, tongues and peoples of the earth, that there are Gentiles as well as Jews. Thus they are scattered among all the nations. Jesus, being the good Shepherd, knows his sheep, he calleth them by their name and they follow him. Now, in order to successfully call each and every one of his people unto him. from wherever they have been scattered, he must have power over all the nations, so as to overcome every obstacle in his people's way. This necessarily requires him to have power over the devil and all his works, over all men and all their works, so as to gather out unto himself and his works all that the Father gave him in eternity before time began. This rule over the nations is with a rod of iron; that is, not one more and not one less than those chosen in him can or shall be called unto

him. This is relentless as iron and as inflexible. Further, every one chosen in him shall come to him, they cannot remain away, no matter who or where they are. This mighty Ruler moves mountains and dries up seas, if necessary, in order to come at those he loves and seeks unto salvation. In the vision which Nebuchadnezzar had, he saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image upon the feet that were of iron and clay and brake them in pieces. Then the iron and clay and brass and silver and gold, of which the image was composed, became as the chaff of the summer threshingfloors, and the wind carried them away. This image represented certain kingdoms or nations of the earth. The stone cutout of the mountain, and which smote the image, was Jesus. The setting up of the kingdom of God uproots all other kingdoms. "As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." When Jesus' rule is made manifest in his people, they are broken-hearted and contrite-spirited. All fleshly ambition, pride and vainglory, all self-righteousness and creature wisdom, are cast down. The one in whom these are becomes less than nothing at the feet of the great Ruler, broken to shivers as a potter's vessel. Surely they are potter's vessels, for God is their Potter, and they are the work of his hands. All that fall upon this stone, Jesus, shall be broken. Every one that is brought to the end of the earth in his experience does fall on this stone, on this foundation that cannot be moved, this elect and precious corner-stone, and every such one is broken in heart and contrite in spirit. It is at fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. None know this fearfulness but the children of God. They know, too, that fearful as it is, it is the safest place for them to fall. They rather that God be their Judge than man, for God looks upon the heart, and not upon the outward appearance, as does man. Further, they know that the Judge of all the earth will do right. The overcoming power of Jesus is seen in his gathering his people from the ends of

the earth and in their being broken to pieces upon him. It is a hard and bitter experience, but then, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Blessed is he that endureth these things for righteousness' sake. The poor in spirit have the kingdom of heaven. The rule of Jesus, full as it is of the hardness of iron to our natural powers, is tempered with mercy and loving-kindness to the faith of those that trust in him.

Written at the request of Mrs. M. I. Davie, of Fulton, Ky. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 23.
December 1, 1916

REVELATION XXII. 1-2

THE PURE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the true of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Our views on the above text were asked for several months ago, but we have not until now felt that we could write upon it. Even now we do not know that what we shall write will be satisfactory to our inquirer, but can give only such views as we have, leaving the issue with him who works all things after the counsel of his own will.

He who shewed this river to John was one of the seven angels "which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues." Also, this angel had a golden reed with which he

measured the city of God, its gates and its wall. John could only see these wonderful things as they were shown to him. He could not of himself see these things for himself, but was wholly dependent upon revelation. True, John was a called and ordained apostle of the Lamb, but this fact did not make him any the less dependent upon the Holy Spirit of God for all his instruction. In this revelation recorded in the last chapter of the book called Revelation, John sees the life of the holy city (the new Jerusalem) as a river pure and clear coming forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Wherever this river flows in its course, there is spiritual, eternal life; wherever it does not flow, naught but death prevails. This living water is all that makes the difference between life and death, fruitfulness and desolation.

Naturally speaking, all life naturally would cease upon this earth very soon if all water was to disappear from the earth. In the western part of the United States are vast tracts of barren deserts where no rain ever falls, where no rivers pass nor dews descend, and where deathly silence of desolation ever reigns. In some instances man has devised a way to get water into these regions by means of irrigation and where this has been done green verdure and fruitful fields abound. It is the coming of the water has wrought the wondrous transformation. Also, it is well known that the valley of the Nile River in Egypt, would be utterly barren were it not for the fact that the Nile overflows its banks every year, watering the valley on either side for many miles. Upon this yearly overflow has depended for centuries the fertility of that region. Where the last drop of the overflow ends, the first grain of sand of the Nubian Desert begins. The water compels the desert sands to come only so far, and no farther. It is wonderfully appropriate that the Spirit of divine truth throughout the Bible frequently uses the natural element of water to signify the life of the church, and the work of the Holy Spirit. All that makes the difference between

the saved and the unsaved, the elect and the nonelect, is water, living water, the water of eternal and spiritual life. Where this water flows in its course as it proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and unto whomsoever it is directed by the authority of him that sits in the throne, there is to be manifested spiritual and eternal life. Wherever this water does not go, is not directed, there death never-ending prevails. Thus spiritual life is wholly dependent upon the water of this living river, and upon the divine authority that sends it forth, and which directs its course. Those reached by this river are no better by nature than those not reached; therefore salvation is not by works. It is a mercy that any are saved, and that not all are left in death to perish forever. The course and direction which this living water takes depends alone upon the enthroned power of God and of the Lamb, and not in the least upon any merit in the creature, nor upon his will, for he is dead until this water reaches him. It is significant that the Scripture here combines the words "God" and "Lamb." When we think of God, we think of all that is awe-inspiring: of great power, infinite wisdom, unerring judgment, boundless truth, and such other great and high qualities. When we think of Lamb, we think of the crucified, of obedience, of meekness gentleness, love, compassion and mercy: such qualities as seem to mitigate the awful dignity of God to poor, fallen man. Were God simply great, wise and just, he could not have any inclination to condescend to our low estate, but because he is the Lamb as well as God he pities our destitution and his bowels of mercy wove with compassion toward those who have not the slightest claim upon so great and holy a Being. Thus, when we are told that eternal life as a pure, clear river proceeds from God and the Lamb, we know that it comes not only directed by the omnipotence and infinite wisdom of God, but as well from his mercy, love and pity. It flows out of the crucified One, front

the riven side of Christ, out of the clefts of the Rock of the ages.

The tree of life is “in the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river.” What is meant by “the street of it?” In the chapter just before this, we have a full and minute description of the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem, which came down “from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,” and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. In the midst of this street of the city (not the street of the river) was the tree of life. The city of God has but one street, though the Arminian heaven is said to have golden streets, more than one street, no telling how many. However, the new Jerusalem, which is from above, and which is the mother of all the spiritually born, has one street, one only, and that street is pure gold, not golden. That which is golden way be more or less mixed with alloy. It takes very little gold to make a thing pass as golden. But that which is pure gold, as this one street is said to be, cannot have the least admixture of alloy. This one street of pure gold is the one way in which all the inhabitants of the city, the people of God walk. Here they all meet and mingle, interchanging expressions of mutual love and fellowship, greeting one another with the holy kiss, saluting their brethren with heavenly greetings. This is the way all the holy prophets went, herein walked the apostles and the primitive church, here now walk all that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart, and that hope in his mercy. This street is faith. “The just shall live by his faith.” “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” The faith of God's people is the same in all ages. It is pure gold, because it is the gift of God, and not obtainable by man by any exercise of his own. It is pure gold, too, because it has successfully endured all the fiery trials to which God's people have ever been subjected in all ages. In the midst of this faith (street) is the tree of life, Jesus Christ. He was in the midst of Abel's faith, of Noah's, of

Abraham's, of the faith of the whole cloud of witnesses which ever encompasses the child of God. Our faith finds its entire satisfaction and aim in Jesus Christ, faith embraces him and him only his blessed character, life, work, death, resurrection and ascension to glory, as well as his coming again, not as a sacrifice for sin, but unto salvation.

There is nothing else in the midst of the faith of the New Jerusalem but the fullness of the Godhead in Christ Jesus. Also, the tree of life is on either side of the river of life. This shows the situation, not only of Jesus, who is the tree of life, but also of the church of Jesus, which through him lives forever. Her days are as the days of this tree, so it is no accident that the Scripture uses the pronoun “her” when it says, “and yielded her fruit every month.” We used to wonder why it said “her fruit” instead of “his fruit,” but it is because of the vital oneness of Christ and his church that it so says “her fruit” - His fruit is her fruit. She has her fruitfulness in Him. She bears whatever he quickens her to bear. Therefore, the tree of life, Jesus, as well as his church, being on either side of the river, it is nourished and sustained by the water of this living stream. This tree of life is on both sides, on the law side as well as on the gospel side. Jesus and his people are seen throughout the Old Testament in the times that were legal, as well as throughout the New Testament in the times that are gospel. This tree is ever living, therefore is ever-fruitful, because the river along which it is planted is ever flowing, never ceasing, never abating its volume nor the force of its current. We are reminded of the words in first Psalms: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he

doeth shall prosper.” This Psalm seems to us to describe the character not of David, but of Christ.

We have frequently noticed in the summer time, when we occasionally have long, dry spells, that the leaves on many trees will wither with the heat, curl up and fall off but along the banks of rivers, brooks and other streams, the trees will be more vigorous and green and show no sign of suffering from the drought. The roots of those trees so favorably situated are constantly fed by water from the stream, so that they are better able to stand the season of little rain. Thus Christ is planted alongside the river of the water of life, and the drought and and famine and pestilence, peril and desolation and sword, affect his life and fruitfulness not at all. When we look back and consider all the ups and downs through which this old earth has passed since it was first created, then consider the tree of life that has maintained its perennial bloom throughout it all, we wonder indeed at the marvelous life sustaining property of this river of the water of life. The world has been visited over and over again with famine, pestilence, wars, earthquakes, tires, and various upheavals and destructions of various free, some Scythian. His people are drawn unto him from the east, the west, the north, and the south. Some come in through the north gates of the city, some through the south gates, some through the east gates and some through the west gates. But every several gate was a pearl, so no matter from whence they came, through what diverse experiences and out of what various tribulations, they all come through the gate of pearl, for there is, after all, but one way into the city, and that the way of Jesus' blood and righteousness. Also, there were twelve apostles. These were fruits of the tree of life. All of them preached the same doctrine, but no two preached it alike. Each had his own manner of declaring it. And we emphasize the fact that the manner of the fruit, as well as the fruit itself, is all of Jesus Christ. We have many God-

called ministers of God among the Old Baptists today, but we will venture to say that no two of them preach the gospel exactly alike. They all preach the same truth, but each has his own manner of doing it, each his own gift. We should not demand that our brethren in the ministry see things exactly as we do, that they should use our phraseology to clothe their views. Sister Clarice Durand once said or wrote to us that our being in the strait and narrow way did not necessarily make us narrow minded. She meant by that that a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ could maintain his own views of Scripture without compelling others to bow down to those views, or without demanding that his views be accepted as the articles of their faith. It is narrow mindedness to demand that all our brethren square themselves by our rule and level. "Let brotherly love continue and in order to this, charity must abound."

These various manner of fruits, all of the same tree of life, the one Jesus, are all being yielded in their season, so that there is fruit-bearing all the time. Even in the cold winter time, when we feel that we are cold and indifferent to the things of the Spirit, even then fruit is being yielded. If this were not so, why would one know that he is cold and barren? A dead person does not know he is cold. Therefore, the very fact that we sometimes get into cold states, and know it, that very consciousness of coldness is a fruit of the living tree. So sometimes it is prayer, sometimes praise, sometimes thanksgiving, sometimes sorrowing, some bearing burdens, and again being delivered. But various as are the manners of these fruits, they are all yielded by the same tree, and are yielded in all seasons of our experience to suit the seasonal need.

The last clause of our text is: "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." These leaves are the promises made of God in Christ Jesus to his people, which he chose in

him before the world began. Leaves on a tree show that winter is passed, that the dormant state is ended and that the time of fruit, will soon appear. Leaves prophesy fruit. All during the legal dispensation there were numerous types and shadows, which all prophesied the fruitfulness of the gospel when Christ should fulfill all those prophetic things. The leaves of the law portended the fruit of the gospel. So the leaves of the tree of life are the promises which God has made to his people in Christ Jesus. These heal the nations. They heal not simply the people of God among the Jews, but all nations, his people scattered abroad among all the kindreds of the earth. These leaves of the tree, or promises in Christ Jesus, are far too numerous for us to enumerate them all, but we must call attention to a few. Let us take the promise which God made to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Here is veiled the truth that Christ is the seed of Isaac, which was the seed of Abraham, and that in Christ all nations (Gentiles as well as Jews) should be blessed. All nations, according to this promise, are to benefit in the salvation which is by grace through Jesus Christ.

We see how this one leaf of the tree of life, or this one promise made to Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, heals the nations, for according to it redemption is come among all the kindreds of the earth. So likewise the Scriptures are filled with these leaves, or promises, which God has made to his people in Christ Jesus. These promises are the basis of our hope and trust in him. The very hope of eternal life which God has put in the hearts of his spiritual heirs, this hope is itself a promise. We make a great mistake if we think our hope is the fullness of our inheritance. It is but the earnest of it. Some day, at his appearing, Jesus will bring the hope of his people to a glorious fruition. Then will we know as we are known and see as we are seen. In the meantime does not this hope save us from the wounds which sin has made, does

it not heal the nations? Paul says we are saved by hope. This hope is a promise of better things to come, and like all other promises made to us in Christi it is a leaf of the tree of life. Paul was greatly dismayed when the thorn entered his flesh. He asked thrice that it be removed. It was not removed, but God promised him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It was this promise that healed Paul throughout his long and faithful ministry: the sufficiency of grace. This made him equal to all his adversities, enabled him to triumph over all hi enemies and made him able to say at last that he had fought a good fight and kept the faith. All these promises, or leave of the tree of life, are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by him and God is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness. The thing he has promised, that will he do He changes not. In his promise and his oath he has given the heirs of glory a strong consolation through two immutable things in which it, is impossible for God to lie.

Written at the request of sister V. A Edward, of Burden, Kansas.

H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times
May 1 1915

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN US

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." – Romans 8:11.

This passage of the inspired Word declares that if the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead dwells in us who believe, that this same Spirit shall raise our mortal bodies in the future resurrection to take place when the Lord Himself

shall descend from heaven, as is promised in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter four, verses 16 and 17. According to our Lord's words in John 5:29, there will be two resurrections. The one unto the resurrection of life, the other unto the resurrection of damnation. The first of these shall be that of the redeemed unto glory, the second shall be that of the finally impenitent reprobate wicked, unto eternal punishment. Paul, by inspiration, in Romans 8:11, announces to the Lord's people that the assurance that they are to be raised in the first resurrection which shall be unto life and immortality, is that the Spirit which raised up Christ from the dead already dwells in the elect here in this present life which we now live in this present evil world. This indwelling Spirit is proof, or pledge, that the mortal bodies of the saints shall in due time be quickened and changed into conformity with the glorious body of Christ which He Himself now wears in Heaven. Our body is now mortal, but then it shall be immortal; now it is corruptible, then it shall be incorruptible. This word "mortal" means being in subjection to death; not simply being liable to die, but definitely subject to death; and when dead, being in subjection to death. Unless we who are now living on the earth are among those to be alive and remaining on the earth when our Lord comes, death shall one day take these bodies or ours. However, if the Lord is to come during our lifetime, we shall not die, but shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Should our Lord tarry, then we shall die as have the past generations of all who have truly believed in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Yet death shall not be able to forever in-chain in the grave these bodies of ours. They are a part of the purchased possession whose redemption is promised in Ephesians 1:4. It is for this adoption, which is the redemption or resurrection of the body, that we wait and hope. These bodies now mortal, shall be quickened. The Holy Spirit in the Word tells us by what means it is to be

accomplished. The “same Spirit” which raised up Christ from the dead when He arose, is the same Spirit by which the children of God are brought to believe savingly in Christ, Ephesians 1:19-20 so declare. And this same Spirit which in-dwells the believing child of God is the abiding earnest, or pledge, that our mortal bodies shall also be quickened by means of this very Spirit, when the time set by God to do so, shall arrive. The word, “shall” is important. The Scripture does not declare that this Spirit “IS” quickening our mortal bodies, but that it “SHALL” do so. It is yet future, it is not something experienced by us while in this present earthly life. It is not the same thing as regeneration, but is resurrection. The notion that there is such a thing as the quickening of the mortal body now in our present experience, is not in accord with Scripture teaching. The theory that this quickening of the mortal body is in our present experience of God’s grace, is not in accord with Paul’s experience as set forth by him in Romans 7. In the Spirit’s work of regeneration, the sinner comes into possession of a divine nature imparted within him and planted within him. The old human nature is not rooted up and cast out, neither is it quickened or a whit changed from what it was prior to regeneration. It is still the Old Man. The body remains the same: “dead because of sin” (Rom. 8:10). So long as the child of God stays here in this world, he carries with him this “body of death”. The stench of it intrudes into all his best endeavors, its impurities stain his prayers and meditation and spoils his efforts to obedience. There is no quickening of the “body” this side of the “first resurrection.” (It is the flesh, the “old man”, and remains only earthy and mortal as it is.) The essence of that for which we now hope, is the coming of the Lord from heaven to change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto the body of His own glory. “Looking for that blessed hope, the appearing of the great God and our

Saviour Jesus Christ." Then, and not until then, we shall awake in Christ's likeness and be satisfied forever.

What evidence have you or I, or any one, that we are to have a place and part in the "first resurrection"? That is, the future coming forth of the complete and whole redeemed church in body and in soul and in spirit from among the dead? The evidence we have is this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our mortal bodies now. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. (I Cor. 3:19). Likewise, it is declared that our bodies are the members of Christ. Being the members of Christ, can they be lost forever in death? To say so would be to say that part of the body of Christ can remain forever dead. It cannot be! Death shall be swallowed up in victory, the grave itself shall be led captive for having so long held captive the bodies of the saints. When the Lord Himself shall be revealed from heaven bringing with Him the spirits of all them that sleep in Him, to unite them to their resurrected bodies, then the "creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." This is the divine fulfillment of our salvation in Christ for which we wait in hope. This present earth and heavens in which we are now being reserved unto fire and unto the day of judgment of ungodly men, in which the elements being on fire shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works therein shall be burned up. Is not this the lake of the fire of the second death which is to engulf in eternal torment all of the finally impenitent, reprobate wicked?

This "second death" shall have nothing to do with those having part in the "first resurrection" which is the coming forth from among the dead all the elect of God in Christ.

We who hope in Christ who look for His appearing in glory to bring us into that glory with Himself, and so to be with Him and be like Him, are not looking for the "fire" nor into the

“fire”, but we look for the new heavens and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. Even now, we are citizens of that new creation by reason of that blessed Holy Spirit which now abides in the children of God. Though we are in the world, we are not of it.

This is a grand theme and I glory in it. I wish I had the ability to set it forth in some measure of the beauty and grandeur in which I have been made to believe in it. I have but scanned it, just hinted at it. I have a blessed hope, unworthy though I am in myself, that I shall one day see Jesus face to face and be like Him. To be like Him will necessitate our having a body like His. This He has promised us. That body which we shall then wear, which body is to be like His, shall be this present mortal body then quickened, changed, made immortal and incorruptible. This the Scriptures teach, and thus am I blessed to believe it.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

THE SABBATH.

DURING the past eighty years, and it little more, articles on this subject have from time to time appeared in the columns of the SIGNS, so that, at first thought, it might be supposed the matter had been thoroughly covered, but it may not be amiss for us to add our little mite, with the hope of presenting to our readers a few points which they per haps have not before thought of along this line. No single text or subject involved in the Bible can ever be exhausted by mortal man, no matter how much he may preach and write about it. A single individual may very easily say all he has to say upon any one subject, but even then there remain vast unsounded depths he has not touched nor dreamed of. Around this matter of the Sabbath have clung from ancient times many conflicting and peculiar notions, customs and authorities.

Some of these let us glance at. It cannot be wrong to call attention to error when the motive is to contrast it with the truth. Christ often did so in his discourses, and the apostles after him in their preaching and writing. After dwelling upon what we believe to be the false side of the matter, we shall hope to bring all to the touchstone of truth, that we may put it all to proof, holding fast the good. After all, it is not what we say or believe upon this or any other subject, but what the Bible says, that stands. Any man's unsupported opinions amount to very little. What God Almighty through the operation of his Holy Spirit in the writing of the Scriptures, and in the experience of his children, has left on record must be the man of our counsel. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." We find it generally regarded among men that the sabbath is one of the days of the week, a day of twenty-four hours, as any other literal day, a day wherein as much labor as possible must be restricted and the time devoted to church-going, teaching and reading the Bible, and the like. The great mass of humanity, to all appearances, actually believes that Sunday, or the Sabbath, is really better than any other day of the week, and that God is really better worshipped and served then than at any other time. Any higher, holier, more spiritual concept of the sabbath than this seems not to ever have entered the consciousness of the vast majority of men, notwithstanding what Christ and the prophets and the apostles say about it in words of easy reading. Man is naturally a worshipping creature; all the nations of the world, civilized and uncivilized, are instinctively religious. This religion, inherent in all men by nature, is as much carnal, sensual and devilish as any other principle of his fallen nature. The so-called christians of the world are not alone in their worship of a god; they do not in this respect

outrun the most degraded races of men, and, furthermore, the god which most people talk about and worship, a god that cannot get along without the help of man, who cannot save them without their consent, and who, in all his acts, must have the cooperation of humanity to carry out his purpose, has no more real existence than the veriest pagan deity that the imaginations of men have conjured up, and those who worship such a god are as much sunk in heathenism as the rankest cannibal that bows to a stick or a stone. There is not the slightest difference, in fact, between an imagined god and one carved from marble or hewn from a tree. It is not to be wondered at, then, that in the worship of this imaginary god, who needs the help of man, many practices have arisen having no other authority for their observance than what is imagined or handed down as tradition from one generation to another. Such customs must not be confounded with the teachings of the Scriptures and the order of the gospel church of the Lord Jesus Christ, both of which are chaste, pure and unadulterated with the teachings and ideas of men, as is clearly seen by the elect when the Comforter takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto them. The observance of a sabbath, or rest-day, is not confined to what is called the christian world. Mohammedans observe Friday, Jews Saturday, and many others Sunday, as a sabbath or day of rest. Apart from all religions sanction, the physical and mental needs of men require certain periods of rest in which to recuperate, thus, among all the various races of men, ancient and modern, days have been set aside for this purpose. It is but natural, too, that most races of men should claim what they consider divine authority for its observance. That portion of mankind that professes to be christian claims as authority for observing a sabbath day the commandment in the Mosaic law which reads, “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy

God: in it thou shalt not do any work." But if this be our authority for keeping the sabbath, why not keep the seventh instead of the first day of the week, as is now generally done? Has any one right to thus modify the law which God gave to Israel by the hand of Moses? In so doing, is not that one as truly a transgressor as if he had broken every commandment of it? "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The law knows no mercy, revision or amendment at the hands of men. It is inexorable in all its demands, and will compromise its justice to suit none. It is no respecter of persons. We mean the law of God, not that of men. Well, if it be conceded that Saturday should be kept, and not Sunday, are we sure that our present Saturday is the old seventh day of the law? Does anybody know? Can anybody tell? Do we know, can we prove that our present seven-day week begins and ends as did the week of the old covenant? The Jewish year had 354 days, ours has 365. The calendar we use is of ancient Roman, not Jewish origin. The Romans originally counted 304 days, divided into ten months, as a year. In this way they got so far behind the sun and moon that Julius Caesar decreed the year 46 B. C. should have 445 days in order to catch up. Again, in 1582, ten days were dropped from the year to make it come out right, and again, in 1752, the same thing was done. Now, with all this juggling of the calendar, who knows but what the weeks have gotten mixed as well? Strong is the probability that they have. Confronted with this obstacle, the learned Doctor C. I. Scofield gets around it by saying that it does not make any difference what day of the week we observe as the sabbath, just so we devote one-seventh of our time to the Lord. Just here the learned man runs against the first and greatest commandment of the whole law, which says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." To do this would require all the time, not one-

seventh of it. But, turning from this for the moment, Arminians claim that the seventh day sabbath of the Jews is not exacted of christians now, but that we must keep the first day of the week, or Sunday, as the sabbath. To prove this they take refuge in inferences drawn from the New Testament, but are not able to cite any definite command from the teachings of Christ and the apostles to the effect; that the first day should he thus kept. The sabbath of the old covenant was enjoined by strict and positive command, it was not left to be inferred. if Jesus had intended his disciples in this new day to observe the first day of the week particularly, would he have left it to be inferred? would he not have definitely enjoined it as he did the communion and baptism? It is true the Head of the church rose from the tomb the first day of the week, but he never spoke of it as an example for any one else to follow, nor as a matter to be celebrated every Sunday simply. True, that same evening of that same first day he appeared in assembly with his disciples, Thomas being absent, but, again, he spoke nothing to signify that his appearance would be confined to first days. On the other hand, after eight days had past he appeared again, Thomas being then with them. This was not the first day of' the week, since it was eight days after the first appearance in the first assembly. The descent of the "Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost was on the first day of the week, since Pentecost always came on the first day of the week after seven sabbaths from the time of the passover. But in nothing that was preached or said on that day by any one of which we have any record was there given command to the church of Jesus to remember Sunday, the first day, to keep it holy. In Acts xx. 7, we read that on one occasion on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread and Paul preached. This has given rise in the minds of some to the thought that the apostles usually held their meetings on the first day of the week, but such was not the

case. It was a daily matter with them, not a one-seventh-of-the-time matter. Acts ii. 46, tells us that "they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Members were added to the church every day, not simply one day. Acts v. 42, assures us that "daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Acts xvi. 5, declares churches were established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily. "It is said of Paul in Acts xvii. 17, that he disputed in the synagogues with the Jews, and with devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. He did not have to have a fine church-building to do his preaching in, nor confine his ministry to one day of the week. Also, in the school of Tyrannus, at Ephesus, Paul spoke daily. Surely we have deduced enough evidence to prove that the gospel church of the Lord Jesus does not confine its worship and the exercise of its gifts to any one day of the week, and it has always been significant of Old School Baptists and their preachers that they have always been, and still are, as ready to get together for a meeting any day of the week as well as Sunday. We have known our brethren often to lay aside all business and labor to assemble for a meeting: on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, or any other day, just as well as on a Sunday.

But now we have dwelt so long on the subject of the sabbath from the stand-point of formality and custom, that we desire to come at the real heart of the matter. When the woman at the well in Samaria asked Jesus whether it was better to worship in Jerusalem or in the mountains of Samaria, he told her neither, but that they who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth. This declaration of Jesus gloriously and triumphantly sounds the death knell of all legalism, of all rituals and religious forms, laying bare the great heart of truth. Not who we are, nor where we are, matters so much

as the spirit and the truth in us. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” liberty from all the things of the law, from its curse and condemnation, death, hell and sin. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” The truth is Jesus. Those who, through grace, know him are the Lord’s freemen. Their slavery is abolished. There is but one place where the law has ever been kept, and that is in Jesus Christ. He fulfilled the law in every jot and tittle, and no man ever did it but he. The sabbath was a part of the law. He must have kept it. If there is one slightest part of the law which Jesus did not keep, and which it devolves upon man to keep, there can be no hope for any sinner the world over. The obedience of Christ may as well not have covered any of the law as not to have covered it all, for if he left undone one thing we are lost. The whole law pointed to Christ. While the Jews thought they had eternal life in the keeping of it, really all the time it was in effect it was testifying of Jesus, of his sufferings and the glory that should follow. The sabbath in the Mosaic covenant was given to Israel by God as a sign, a figure, not a substance. It was a sign of a finished creation and of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. In Exodus xx. 11, it is given as a sign of the finished creation: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” In Deut. v.15, the sabbath is given as a sign of their sanctification, of their deliverance and separateness from Egypt: “Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” Now add to this the saying of Jesus himself in Mark ii. 27, 28, and we have the kernel of the whole matter: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” Jesus is Lord of the sabbath. In other words,

the sabbath is his, it belongs to him, he fulfills its meaning and brings to light its full substance. The sabbath ended the week of labor; came after all, not part, of the work was done. So Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Called to him by effectual grace, they, the laboring and heavy laden, come. All their work under the law is done. Their guilty conscience having found no peace in it all, each one sinks helpless, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." To such Jesus is the end, the purpose, the fulfillment of the law. He is their Sabbath-day. Entering into him, they never go back under the law again. All the work is done. They rest from their labors as God did from his. In Jesus the spiritual creation of God is finished, their redemption perfect, their justification complete, their resurrection secured. Jesus is also their sanctification, their separateness from the world and all it contains. In this, too, he fulfills and is the Sabbath. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Whatever typical righteousness there was in the old Jewish sabbath day is fulfilled by the Spirit in the Lord's people, and they do not fulfill it themselves in keeping Sunday as the sabbath. This matter of the sabbath is a very serious, solemn, spiritual, continual matter, not to be confounded with customs and usages of men. Isaiah, by faith, looking upon the gospel church and the finished work of Jesus, said, "From one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Thus we see from abundant Scriptures that the assembling of all flesh, Gentiles as well as Jews, to worship before the Lord is not confined to one day of the week, but is from "one sabbath to another," all the time, perpetual, everlasting. Jesus' explanation of the sabbath caused the; flows to regard him as a sabbath-breaker. Old School Baptists' explanation of it has often caused them to be regarded in the same light by the world. We should rejoice to be found in the same lot with him. He suffered

without the gate. “Let us go forth unto him without the camp, outside legalism and all its forms and shadows, bearing his reproach. The church in its gospel character is under grace, not law. We are not by this, saying that our people should not respect the laws of the land which enjoin the observance of Sunday as a day of rest from business and everyday labor. We must respect the powers that he, must live law abiding, respectable lives in the sight of all men, so far as in us lies. But while observing Sunday as a day of rest we do lit as unto men, not as unto God, not recognizing that such observance gives us any favor or merit whatever in the sight of God. Our law in the State of Virginia reads thus: “If any person be found on the sabbath day laboring at his trade, or calling, or employ his servants or apprentices in labor or other business, household or other work of necessity or charity excepted, he is guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction he must be fined not less than five dollars for each offense.” We presume other States have much the same law. Old School Baptists, as citizens of their respective common-wealths, are bound by apostolic order to live within the law of the land. However, we emphasize in conclusion, in so keeping the sabbath, or Sunday, we do it. as unto men, not as unto the Lord. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 19
October 1, 1914

SALUTARY

VERY much to our surprise, the publishers and editor of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES have insisted that we assume the duties and responsibilities of associate editor of the above

named paper. Inscrutable indeed it is to us why their minds should revert in our direction when in search of some one to serve them in this capacity, for of all the ministering brethren within the range of our acquaintance surely we are the least qualified in every way for such a place as that of editor of such a substantial periodical as is the SIGNS. However, during all of our life in the Old School Baptist Church since our baptism in December, 1900, at Southampton, Bucks Co., Pa., by the late Elder F. A. Chick, we seem never to have been able to set ourself against the wishes of our brethren when expressed with definite emphasis. When the church at Southampton in the spring of 1903 declared that in their opinion we were called to the ministry, and thereupon called for our ordination, we could do nothing but submit, though had the church at that time had respect to our own personal feelings in the matter they would have immediately dropped it. Well-nigh all the evidence that we have ever had of a call to the ministry has been in the manner in which our ministry has been received by those among whom our lot has been cast, rather than in any special exercises of mind to which we have been subjected. We do not mean to say that we have had no exercises of mind whatever with reference to our being called to the ministry, but it seems to us they would have been negligible without the affirmative testimony of the churches where our labor has been allotted us. For the reason, therefore, that the church has demanded and called for our service, and not because we felt we had any great service to render, we have endeavored since our ordination to preach the gospel of the Son of God with such ability as he has been pleased to afford us at the times of his appointment and in the places of his guidance. And now comes to us the strongly expressed request of those in charge of the SIGNS that we undertake, in conjunction with Elder Ker, the editorial work of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. We dare not be obstinate and refuse, though we wonder very seriously what

they have ever seen in us to make them think we can perform such work. It is in much trepidation that we agree to assume with them the care and labor of issuing this oldest and highly appreciated paper of the Old School Baptists, which has and still does afford comfort to many otherwise deprived of gospel privileges, and we agree to do this fully realizing our great limitations, and that nothing but superhuman intelligence and wisdom can fit one to faithfully discharge such arduous duties. The SIGNS from the time of its first publication has been remarkable for its cleanliness – its freedom from controversy and from false doctrine. The present publishers and editor desire to maintain it so, and with this aspiration we are in most hearty accord. The SIGNS has never been a hobby-rider, but has always endeavored to accord equal emphasis to all phases of the doctrine and of the experience of the people of God. The gospel is so full of such an infinite variety of harmonious truths that a man's limitations alone get him into a rut, and not the narrowness of the gospel. Therefore in our editorial work our limitations will be plainly manifest to all who read our writings, and there will appear from time to time our failure to treat satisfactorily upon all texts submitted to us with request for our views. We can only submit such views as we have, and many requests must perforce remain uncomplied with for lack of knowledge to answer them. Only with such ability as the Lord is pleased to give us can we promise to serve the readers of the SIGNS, for we have no reserve capacity of our own to draw upon. That which the Lord has freely given us we are disposed to hand on to you, no more, no less. To preserve the SIGNS free from error and from the fallibility of men requires the everlasting vigilance of the Holy Spirit, and nothing short of it. In former days the SIGNS has had to meet and combat outspoken and visible forms of error and false doctrine, but never before in the history of the Baptists in America has the insinuation of evil and falsehood been so

secret and subtle as now. Such a situation demands clear and bold presentation of the truth, with great plainness of speech. When we think of the warriors of God who have since 1832 labored in editing the SIGNS in defense of the truth, we seem to ourself to be but a mere stripling beside them, but rejoice that David's God still reigns and rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and that he will ever unerringly direct the simplicity of truth to the fatality of all that arrays itself against the little flock, to whom is given the kingdom of heaven. To all the readers of the SIGNS we would say, we need your charity and forbearance, and the encouragement of your prayers to help us forward in our work. Remember that we are by nature but a weak, erring man, in constant need of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to make us of any value whatever to those who love the truth, and only with that measure of divine grace which God in his mercy grants us do we promise to serve you. With the sincere desire that the relations of the editors and publishers of the SIGNS with each other and with the readers of the paper be mutually helpful and comforting to all concerned, we desire to subscribe ourself, Yours to serve in the obedience of the gospel, H. H. LEFFERTS.

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 13
July 1, 1914

I SAMUEL 3.1

"And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision."

Samuel, the child, was ministering to the Lord before Eli. Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons, had, while filling the priest's office, wickedly perverted the offerings brought by the people to be given to the Lord in the sanctuary. They had

waxed fat on the meat of the sacrifices, were not obeying the laws for the sacrificial offerings that had been given their fathers from God through the medium of Moses in olden time. They listened not to the advice of Eli, their father, when he would have had them refrain from evil, but persisted in their wickedness to their own destruction purposed of God, as we afterward find recorded. We can well imagine under such circumstances what a famine of "hearing the word of the Lord "must have existed among his chosen people, Israel, at this time. No prophet was there then to tell them what God would do, or to remind them of what he had done for them. Samuel had not yet been brought forth to the people as a man sent from God to prophesy. Most certainly then must the word of the Lord have been precious in those days. We to-day have certain gems which we style "precious," because scarce, of rare beauty, and hence of great value. For the same reason was the word of the Lord precious in those days. Dearth of prophecy, the medium through which God made known himself to his people under the legal dispensation, had made the word of the Lord precious because rare, and "there was no open vision." "Open vision" signifies to me a peace and quietness of spirit which comes *in* walking in the commandments of the Lord, and *in* the meditation of his law day and night, when in the face of Jesus Christ we see revealed the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Israel was not at this time abiding in the law and delighting in keeping its conditions, but just as wayward and stiff-necked as ever, was going sadly astray into by and forbidden paths. Consequently the hand of the Lord had gone out against them, and "the word of the Lord was precious [scarce] in those days." The Philistines had them in their grip, men not knowing or caring for the Lord were their masters. O, how their hearts must have sighed within them to be rid of their bondage. Surrounded by the powers of darkness, their soul fainting

within them, they are on the verge of annihilation, when lo, "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." No, indeed, they were far too precious for that. Being the words of inspired prophecy breathed into the heart of Samuel by God himself, they readily found their places in the hearts of his chosen everywhere, and from Dan even to Beersheba, Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. How sweet and precious (of rare beauty and value) most have been the words of his prophecy, coming as they did after such a "famine of hearing the words of the Lord."

Now all that was written aforetime, Paul says was "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." That being the case, then the little sentence quoted at the beginning must have its counterpart in the experience of every child of God on earth to day, else there is no comfort in it, and Paul spoke not the truth. Dear child of God, do you not know what it is to walk in darkness and have no light, to feel the hidden evils of your nature creep forth as wild beasts from the forest at nighttime! Have you not felt the hand of the Philistines upon you, and been well nigh crushed under the bondage of evil men?

"How sore a plague is sin,
To those by whom 'tis felt,
The christian cries, 'Unclean, unclean!'
E'en though released from guilt."

Our sins rising before us blot out God's face from our sight as a thick cloud obscures the light of the sun. A famine is abroad in the land, "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." How we long for just one word from the lips of the divine Master to dispel our gloom and lift us from the mighty depth of woe! As men seek for precious gems of earth to hide their wretchedness and

poverty, and to make themselves rich, so do we seek for the fountain of wisdom that we may hide our leanness and cover our poverty with the precious gems of truth issuing therefrom. In his own good time and way God does speak to us, not through a Samuel or one of the other prophets of old, but through his Son Jesus Christ, for "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," and be sends to us the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which brings to our remembrance all things whatsoever he has told us. God has opened the way of salvation for his people through the merits of Jesus. We had experienced this salvation long ago, but while in the midst of so much affliction and darkness of mind we had almost forgotten it, and our feet had well nigh slipped when the "precious word "spoken in the heart reminded us of his promise, and we are happy again, aye, the "open vision "is restored.

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 69, No. 17
SEPTEMBER 1, 1901.

THE RESURRECTION, THE BETTER RESURRECTION AND THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Desiring to follow brother Ker on the subject of the resurrection, that our readers may see and know that we stand together, I have decided to republish the following article, which was first published October 1st, 1915. The views therein set forth are what we believed then, and what we believe now, and we doubt if we could make ourself clearer should we attempt to write an article now on the

subject. Brother Ker and our self have long been persecuted and ridiculed by some who differ with us, in expression at least, if nothing more, but we have borne it in silence. Now, however, we feel that we must defend ourselves, and the many subscribers of the Signs of the Times who agree with us, that the Bible declares plainly and positively that "the body sown natural" "is raised spiritual," that "mortality is swallowed up of life," and that "he who hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." We have so affirmed always, and shall continue to affirm exactly what the Bible says about the resurrection, and leave it to our brethren generally to decide whether the Bible is right, or the views of a few men of this day who seem to have set themselves up as judges in Israel. We are willing to, and verily shall, take the word of God as the man of our counsel, let others do and say what they may.

H.H.L

The faith of God's elect viewing the resurrection, as described by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians xv., your views in connection therewith, on a better resurrection, as in Hebrews xi. 35, and the first resurrection as in Revelation xx. 5, 6, are solicited through the "*Signs of the Times.*"

A brother who lives in Texas sends the above request to us. This is not the first request of this nature we have had, but have deferred complying with any of them until we felt more at liberty to write upon this subject of the resurrection. The brethren, we feel, have a right to such views as we have upon any subject, and such views as we have we hope we are willing to share with the brethren. If any one has sent us a request for views upon any subject with which we have not complied, it is because we have no views to give them. It is not worth while for us to try to write about something that we know nothing about. As to the resurrection, it is a most

glorious subject, and one that we love to think and to talk about, always to edification, never for the sake of argument or controversy. As to our having any cast-iron, unbending opinions or views to lay down upon this subject for the consideration of our readers, we have none. It is comforting to walk round about this glorious truth of the resurrection and to survey it in its various aspects, but to plunge into the depths of it and to fathom its mysteries, no mortal ever has done it, nor ever will this side of eternity. So much of the resurrection as we have already experienced, we are thereof a witness and are free to talk about; so much of it as is yet beyond our present experience we know nothing, except as it is set forth in the Bible. Right here we want to say that we positively do believe all that the Bible says upon the subject of the resurrection, but we do not claim to understand it all nor to be able to explain it all. In speaking or writing of this matter we have wanted to adhere closely to the Scriptures and the scriptural manner of expression. One of the things about Old School Baptists that first drew us to them in our early experience, was that we saw they were the people that adhered strictly to the Scriptures in all matters of doctrine, faith and practice. Thus it has always been our desire to reject anything in the way of doctrine that did not have a "thus saith the Lord" for it. When we endeavor to clothe scriptural truths in phraseology of our own, we very often change the import of a text by using our own modes of expression instead of quoting the exact Scripture language. This often leads to confusion in the minds of the hearers as to just what this or that preacher means upon any given subject.

We would like our readers to know just how we feel about this matter of the resurrection, and shall try to be clear in our expression, but if any one reads this expecting to have the "mystery" solved for them, they will be disappointed before they read very far. We deem it is a mistake to think

that nothing is known of the resurrection until after we pass out of this life, that it begins simply with the ending of mortality. If we know nothing of heaven while here in the flesh, what assurance or hope have we that we shall ever hereafter know anything about it? Upon what is our hope based if not upon the earnest of the Spirit, that earnest which the Spirit brings to the subjects of grace of that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved for the elect of God? It is a heaven below the Redeemer to know, and when the knowledge of Christ and his salvation is revealed to our faith it is a foretaste of glory. It is then that heaven comes down our souls to greet. These revelations which God brings by the Spirit unto his people, afford the basis of their hope. Therefore it seems to us that the hope of heaven is based upon heaven itself, the hope of the resurrection is based upon the resurrection itself. Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life. This being so, then every manifestation of Jesus in the lives of his people is a manifestation of "the power of the resurrection," and just as we can never know all about Jesus until we see him face to face, without a veil between, just so we shall never know the fullness of the resurrection until then. The life that we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God. This life of the christian being the manifestation of the life of Jesus in his mortal body, then it must follow that God's people, even while in this world, live the life of the resurrection. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." With what did he quicken them? He quickened them by the Spirit and with the life of Christ. This quickening of the Spirit is the entrance of eternal life. Is not this eternal life the very life of Christ, and is not Christ the resurrection? Then that which quickens those who were dead in sin is the power of the resurrection. If we may be permitted to speak of such things having a beginning, we would say that the resurrection life begins with each

individual subject of grace the very moment he is quickened by the Spirit, and from that moment it continues on and on and on through all the travel of the believer, until it is consummated, or shall be consummated, in the full revelation of the infinite glory of God beyond the bounds of mortality. Belief itself is a manifestation of the power of the resurrection. Does not Paul say we believe according to the working of the mighty power which raised Christ from the dead? (See Ephesians i. 19, 20.) Thus, it takes the same power to make one a believer that it took to raise Christ from the dead. Is not, then, belief an effect of the resurrection power? What did God do with those whom he quickened from the death in sin? He raised them up together and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Are not these heavenly places all the privileges and the blessings of the gospel covenant? It seems so to us. Then to enjoy the gospel in any sense whatever, and to whatever extent, there must be a raising of the subject up from death in sin and from under the curse and dominion of the law of sin, and what is this raising up but a further manifestation of "the first resurrection?"

The more we think about this matter the more we feel the impossibility of setting bounds to the resurrection, and saying it begins here and ends there, it includes this or does not include that. The whole life of the believer as a believer and as a manifest child of God is based upon the fact that Christ is risen from the dead, and not only risen himself but came forth bringing his sheaves with him; that is, all that the Father gave unto him before the foundation of the world. The head did not rise without the body, but both the head and the body, so Christ rose from the dead with all his church. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Had Christ not risen from the dead there never could have been the gospel, the church,

faith, hope, love, prayer or praise. All these things have their roots in “the first resurrection,” and the very resurrection life maintains them. Peter never could, at the day of Pentecost, or any other time, have interpreted Joel's prophecy and the Psalms of David had he not been partaker of the life of the resurrection. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and the list there given of all the trials of the people of God. These things they never could have endured except they had that victory that overcometh death. This victory Jesus is, so by faith in him they counted not their lives dear unto themselves. It seems that here must have been a sense, at least, in which mortality was swallowed up of life, since they lost their interest in their mortal lives through the measure of the Christlife given unto them. We have derived great comfort in cloudy days from being able to think that even now Christ is with and within his people, and that having Christ in them they are already the “children of the resurrection.” But we must not lose sight of the fact that there is a future aspect of the resurrection. As regards this futurity of the resurrection we must let the Scriptures bear witness. God has left on record by the pen of inspiration such information concerning what is yet ahead of us as he deemed necessary for us to know, and what God has not disclosed in his written word regarding this matter it is not worth while theorizing or speculating about. We can now know no more about it than the Scriptures declare. “But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial:

but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

Note how all through this language the Spirit is all the time distinguishing between the earthly and the heavenly, the natural and the spiritual. Never are the two confused or mingled, but always kept separate and distinct. The same "it" that is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body. Then in the forty-fifth verse we are told what these two bodies are: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthy [the natural body]: the second man is the Lord from heaven [the spiritual body]." "And as we have borne the image of the earthy [the first man Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [the Lord Jesus Christ]." The same "we" that bear the first earthy image shall bear the second heavenly image, but there are two distinct images. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." No need to cavil over these words, for nothing could be more distinct than the separation made by the spirit in this fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians between flesh and Spirit. Now comes the mystery which no man on earth can ever explain: "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," &c. All of this language we do most certainly believe with all our heart, but as Paul did not go on

and explain it, neither can we. John says, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” What more can we wish to know than this: that we shall be satisfied, when we awake, with His likeness? Whatever it takes to make up that complete and in finite satisfaction we are assured God will give us. But as to what that spiritual body is, how it looks, how it is made, who knows? We do not, and we do not care for any one to try to tell us. Why try to pry into that which God has not seen fit to disclose? The time is coming when we shall know as we are known and see as' we are seen, when that which is in part shall be done away and we shall see face to face. Until then, let us wait. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Very often brethren in quoting this, say “vile bodies,” instead of “vile body.” We do not know why they persist in doing this, for the Spirit doubtless used the right word in saying “body” instead of “bodies.” “Our vile body,” signifying many members, but all one body. Something like it occurs in Ephesians iv. 13: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Notice that the “all,” meaning many, are to be conformed to the one end: the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the perfect man. Nothing is said about their ever becoming perfect men or perfect women, but coming unto the “perfect man.” This agrees with Romans viii. 29: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Here, again, the all or many are to be brought forth in the one image. Again, in Romans viii. 23, we have: “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to

wit, the redemption of our body." Here it is also "our body," not "our bodies," as is so often quoted.

It sets forth the many in one, the many members of the one body. As to the "better resurrection" in Hebrews xi. 35, the connection is, "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." To be delivered from torture meant that they would have to die again at some later time, and they preferred to have it all over with at once in hope of that "better" or real resurrection in all its fullness which can never be broken. Lazarus was raised from the dead, but he was simply brought back to natural life, and had to die again at some later day, therefore his resurrection was not unto eternity, and was not spiritual. The "better" resurrection is the resurrection of the spiritual body which Paul talks about in Corinthians, which is unto eternal glory, and which death can never end. Thus these martyrs for the faith described in Hebrews xi. 35, who were delivered over to be put to death for the truth's sake, did not wish to be delivered from that torture at the hands of men, and thus receive a temporary resurrection, but preferred to depart and be with Christ, which is far "better." As to the "first resurrection" in Rev. xx. 6, this reads, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." Christ was the firstborn from the dead, the first to rise from the dead to die no more. The resurrection of Christ is, therefore, the first resurrection. Those who have part in this resurrection are those who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and for whom he died and rose from the dead. These are risen with Christ and cannot die any more, because he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Those for whom Christ died cannot die, they have everlasting life. The second death, the death of the mortal body, has no power over them, for while their mortal bodies do die and return to dust, the spirit, or life, cannot die. He

that liveth and believeth in me shall never die, but hath everlasting life. When the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they shall be clothed upon with that building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Two different houses, but the same child of God that now lives in this earthly house shall also dwell in that other house not made with hands, the building of God. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." - Matt. xxii. 31, 32. Thus we see that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while dead to us as men, are living unto God, and are not really dead at all. All God's people are just this way: none of them die. Christ having risen from the dead, and they being partakers of this "first resurrection," the second, or corporeal death, can have no power over them.

Elder H.H. Lefferts
Signs of the Times,
August. 15, 1920

2 TIMOTHY II. 15.

"STUDY to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needethi not to be ashamed, rightly diving the word of truth."

Paul addresses Timothy as "My dearly beloved son," and nothing could more feelingly express the interest of the apostle in the young man Timothy, younger certainly in the ministry, even if not so much younger in years. Paul never married, and therefore had no sons of his own flesh and blood, but he calls Timothy his son, because of the spiritual relationship which the one bears to the other in the gospel. John, likewise, addressed his epistle, "My little children," not

meaning that they were literally his children, but that they had been given to hear the word understandingly from his lips, and that he had begotten them by the word of truth, which is the gospel. Likewise had Paul begotten Timothy, Timothy being Paul's fruit in the ministry, therefore he felt fully warranted in addressing him as "My dearly beloved son." In reading this second letter of Paul to Timothy, there are two expressions in it that strike the attention. The first is in the fifteenth verse of the first chapter: "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." This denotes that even in that early day of the church, and in the time of the apostles themselves, the apostasy, or falling away of the churches, had already set in. Already those who called themselves christians were departing from the faith and order of the gospel church, and were receding into legalist practices and teachings. This falling away, Paul says here, included "all they which are in Asia." This does not mean that the churches in Asia had disbanded, or that they had ceased to call themselves christians, but it means that they had fallen away from the doctrine of grace as revealed in the ministry of the apostle Paul, therefore "turned away from me [Paul]." The other expression that strikes us in reading this letter is to he found in the second chapter, third verse: "A good soldier of Jesus Christ." Nothing more severely tests whether one is a good soldier of Jesus than his standing firm in the midst of unfaithfulness on every hand, his facing unpopularity and scorn, his constant emphasis of the doctrine of grace, even though all men forbear. This is an exceedingly severe trial of one's call to preach, and needs great grace to withstand the ordeal. This grace Paul had so that he stood firm to the end, and this grace he desired for the young preacher, Timothy, that he, too, might be found enduring hardness with the courage which living faith alone can impart. It seems to us that these two expressions to which we have just called attention furnish a key to what was in the

mind of the apostle in addressing this letter to Timothy. Being older than Timothy in years, in experience, in grace and in the ministry, and knowing so well the temptations and trials that beset the minister of Jesus, he could but fee an interested anxiety in the welfare and in the labors of the young Timothy, so that he could not refrain from giving expression to this interest, love and sympathy which he did in these two letters written to Timothy. They are full of good advice and wise counsel, advice and counsel which we believe were blessed to the spiritual uplift and strengthening of the 'young man in his ministry. These two letters of Paul to Timothy, though neither of them long, cover a great deal of ground, for in them Paul calls attention to the different points of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, to the order of the house, the function of prayer, the qualifications of elders and deacons, and various other matters, all of which the apostle deemed of importance to the "son" Timothy, as well as to all the church. He stirs Timothy up to the remembrance of those things which Timothy already knew and believed, but which need to be kept constantly before the mind of one who professes to be, and is called to be, a. Preacher of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us take up the text at the beginning of this article in order: "Study." Study what? Is Timothy here commanded to study books, to give himself to an intellectual life, and to the gaining of knowledge which may develop his brain power? Is the even commanded to study the Bible? No, we think none of these things were in the mind of Paul when he told Timothy to study. The word "study" here means "be diligent." In another place, Paul says, Neglect not the gift that is in thee. That which improves a man's gift is the use of that gift. If one is called to preach, then let him preach, and not refuse to do so. Wherever a door is opened in the path of the preacher, wherever and whenever some hungry sheep somewhere calls for preaching, let him preach to that one. In

this way he will not neglect his gift. A man's ministry comes first, before everything else; even before one's own family and one's personal interest and temporal welfare must come the work unto which one is called in the vineyard of the Master. Just as sure as external things intervene and interfere with one's ministry, just so sure is the usefulness of that ministry affected. Therefore, if God has given Timothy a gift to preach, let him preach, and let him do it wherever and whenever the way is opened for that gift to be exercised. Let him not pass by the opportunities of to-day, looking for some bigger thing to-morrow. We well remember a letter which brother Chick wrote us just after our ordination, in which he used this expression: "Do with your might what your hands find to do." He meant nothing more and nothing less than the thought we have just presented, that whatever opportunity there is presented in our path to declare the name of Jesus, declare it with such ability as God gives at that moment, and despise not the occasion because only one or two or a few are there to hear it. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." This is one way in which Timothy's diligence, or "study," was to be manifested. Again, let him "study" himself. Let him consider his failings and his shortcomings, his dependence upon grace and his need of the tuition of the Spirit. Let him take care how he behaves himself in the house (church) of God. Nothing hurts a man's ministry more than improper and undignified conduct in his goings out and comings in before the people to whom he ministers. This Paul I mentions in his first letter to Timothy when he says that these things I write unto thee that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living" God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Let him "study," that is, consider this matter of personal conduct and behavior. Again, let him take heed to the doctrine. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save

thyself, and them that hear thee." This is the kind of "study" that Paul desires to see Timothy engaged in. The word "save" is here used in the sense of "establish." In taking heed and in holding fast the sound doctrine of grace which is in Christ Jesus, he will both save himself from error and delusion, and also save from error and delusion those that hear him; thus will his ministry confirm the churches in the faith of Jesus and establish them in his glorious truth. Studying many or few books will never make a man a better preacher. We do not mean that a preacher of Jesus need be an ignoramus in the world's affairs, a veritable numskull whenever he mixes with his fellow-men, but we do mean that if any preacher reads or studies any book, even the Bible, with the idea that it will make him a better or more able preacher, that preacher has much to learn as to what it takes to make a preacher. Far be it from us to say that one called to preach should not read the Bible. He should most certainly read it, the Scriptures should be the man of his counsel, and we cannot understand how a man called to preach can help reading the Bible, indeed he will be compelled to read it. The stirrings of his gift within himself will compel him to read it whether he wants to or not. We simply mean that any reading that is done with a view to conscious self-improvement is effort vainly pursued. The Bible should be read for its own self, and for the truth's sake, and. not with any ulterior purpose or selfish motive. If we are wrong in this, then our experience is wrong, for we have proved time and time again that whenever we have picked up the Bible with a view to our improvement in ability as a preacher, we have found it locked up and sealed away from our understanding. Now, what is the object of this "study," this diligence on the part of Timothy? It is that he may be manifested as approved unto God. This does not mean that he may show God his approval, but that those to whom he ministers may see in that ministry that Timothy is truly a

God-called and God-sent laborer in the vineyard. In other words, it is the one who hears Timothy preach that receives the evidence that Timothy is surely approved of God. Timothy, nor any other one called to preach, is to make any effort to please man, he is not to accommodate himself to the carnal tastes and inclinations of the natural man. The very fact that hundreds and thousands of men calling themselves preachers of the gospel study to please their congregations, to discover what will draw large crowds, and what will especially hold the young people, is in itself an evidence that such men are not called of God to preach, and that their ministry. has not his divine approval. The evidence that a man's preaching is approved of God is that he stands by the Scriptures, and proves what he says by the Scriptures, that his testimony accords with the written word, and with the experience of the subjects of grace. Such an one takes the Bible as his only authority in doctrine and order, and his preaching is not dependent upon logic or argument to clinch it, but upon the enforcing power of the Holy Ghost, which carries conviction to the hearts of those that hear, and which spiritually demonstrates its truth within them. Such a preacher thus evidently approved of God unto the church is a workman who needeth not to be ashamed. He cannot be put to shame or confusion, for his doctrine is irrefutable when substantiated by the word of God. It cannot be gainsaid nor denied, though it may be scoffed at. Very often those who cannot disprove a thing seek refuge in ridiculing and belittling that thing. "Rightly dividing the word of truth" does not mean simply to show the difference between truth and error. It does not mean simply to tell what Arminians believe, and the distinction of that from what Old Baptists believe. Neither does it mean simply to tell one's own personal experiences. The word of truth itself needs to be divided, and not simply to be distinguished from error. One qualification of an elder is aptness to teach. (1 Tim. iii.

2.) This means ability to teach what the Scriptures mean, ability to expound them and to open up their meaning to the spiritual ear. In dividing the word of truth the law is separated from gospel, and each is given its proper place in the plan of salvation; works are distinguished from grace, the flesh from the Spirit. Then, too, doctrine is defined and explained, the experience is outlined and interpreted, exhortation comes in for its share in stirring up the pure minds unto a godly walk and conversation, and so forth. As we write these thoughts as they flash through our mind we wonder whether we have ever really preached a single sermon. The standard or ideal which Paul sets before the young man Timothy is so high and exalted that we exclaim, Lord, who is sufficient for these things? Surely no man ever can of himself preach the gospel, or behave himself seemly in the house of God; he cannot of himself be diligent, or rightly divide the word of truth. Grace must be his sifficiency every hour and every moment of his days and nights, else his ministry cannot profit those who hear. Grace is the armor of the man of God, it alone can stay him successfully against the cunning wiles of the devil. May the good Lord raise up more and more such preachers in this degenerate age to minister unto his humble poor. Old Baptists cannot look unto nor endow a college to turn out their preachers, they must and do wait upon their God in this matter, and he has never disappointed their trust. We may not have all the preachers we want, but we most assuredly shall have all we need, for we are promised that God will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Written at the request of sister Nancy Hutchison, of Herndon, Va. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 15.
August 1, 1916.

“THE VERY ELECT.”

DEAR BROTHER LEFFERTS: – I would be pleased if you would give your views in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on the language of our Savior as recorded in Matt. xxiv. 24, and Mark xiii. 22. What I want to know in particular is, do the words of the Savior, “the very elect” that shall not be deceived, show or prove they are a special favored few taken from among his elect, while the greater numbers of the election of grace are left to be deceived, and led in the broad way to destruction? Matthew reads: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Mark says, “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.” Mark says “even” instead of “very” elect, as Matthew does, and I have always thought the Savior meant to teach that none of the election of grace should be deceived to their destruction, for do not the words of the Savior mean this: “If it were possible”? which shows it is not possible to deceive the elect, and the elect include all God’s people. I do not believe he has “preferred stock” and “common stock” among his people, and that he saves his “preferred stock” while he lets his “common stock” run at large and go in the broad way to destruction. Now, brother Lefferts, I hope you may have a mind to give us your views on this subject. I have not written this for publication, but just to give you an idea of what I would like for you to notice.

In gospel bonds,
G. E. MAYFIELD.
ELGIN, Oregon.

WE feel that brother Mayfield could write on this subject much better than we can, but as he requests our views he has a right to them, that is, such thoughts as we have upon this subject. This language of Jesus from which our brother quotes in the narratives of Matthew and of Mark relates to the events and signs portending the end of the dispensation then fast drawing to its evening time. All these things spoken of by Jesus were to be fulfilled in the end of the legal dispensation and in the final windup of Jewish nationality. At that time false Christs and false prophets were to arise, showing signs and wonders that would, if possible, deceive the very elect, or even the elect. Let it be noted that the words "it were" in the phrase, "if it were possible," are written in italics, and thus show that they have been inserted by the translators, and are not in the original Greek manuscript. Thus, the deception of the elect would seem to depend upon the possibility of their being deceived. They would be deceived by these false Christs and false prophets if possible, and the possibility of their being deceived would not depend upon their own acuteness of perception, nor upon the sharpness of their wits, but upon whether they were kept from deception by the grace of God. It would indeed be a bold assertion, unwarranted by Scripture, to say that the elect of God cannot possibly be deceived. They can be deceived as well as any one else if the Spirit of truth by its guiding and teaching does not keep them from it, The whole safety of the elect is in the grace of God, not in any sense in themselves, or in their own astuteness. It is worth while to note that in the narratives, both of Matthew and of Mark, Jesus follows his statement of the danger threatening the

elect by saying, “Behold, I have told you before.” To be forewarned by such an one as Jesus is to be forearmed. One cannot be deceived by that against which the Son of God has previously warned him. The warnings of Christ in us the ‘hope of glory will prevent deception, and nothing but that can. Without this intuition of the Spirit, this discernment of the spiritual mind, any of us can be deceived. There may be times in our experience when this spiritual discernment is lacking in us, times at least when it is dormant, then is when we are in danger of being deceived. Such an experience when it comes to one is very useful, for it proves that we cannot afford for one instant to have faith relax its hold upon us, else we become entangled in the cunning craftiness of men. But here is a point that must be emphasized, and not lost sight of: no matter how much one of the elect may be deceived and carried away by it, that does not at all affect his salvation in Christ Jesus. Once a child of God always as child of God. They shall never perish, neither shall any (man) pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no (man) is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. (John x. 28, 29.) The salvation of the elect of God is secure through the work of Jesus against the possibility of a single one of them ever being lost. No matter to what lengths they may wander, to what limits they may stray, they cannot be lost nor shall they perish. Philosophy, science and man-made religions may entangle them for awhile, and may deceive them, even though they are the elect, yet God their Father is greater than all philosophy, science, creeds and dogmas, so that nothing, not only no man, but nothing, shall or can ever pluck them out of his hand. But that even God’s own people may be deceived at times is evident. Did not some one bewitch the Galatians that they sought again to entangle themselves in the yoke of the Mosaic law? That the “churches of Galatia” were deceived for a time is evident from reading Paul’s letter to them, yet we

have not a doubt that they were the elect of God, and are sure their salvation was not a whit affected by their being bewitched. Whenever two brethren hold directly opposite and contrary views of some portion of Scripture both cannot be right, one must be mistaken, and to the extent that he is mistaken, provided he is sincere, he is deceived, yet this does not argue at all that both are not children of God and secure in the salvation which Jesus has wrought for them through his life and death. It is true that the visible organization of the church here in the world does not by any means include all of God's elect. God has a people in every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue under heaven. Not all persons everywhere are God's elect, but that God has his elect among all people everywhere, the Bible does plainly teach. We believe God's people are scattered in all parts of Babylon, they are among all creeds and sects and denominations of men. They are scattered among the Hindus, Mohammedans, Catholics and Protestants. Membership in an Old School Baptist Church is no guarantee that one is a child of God.In all times there have been those who crept in unawares who had no heart-experience of grace, however much they may have had it in the head. There are those, many of them, outside the visible organization of the church who are the elect of God, and there are occasionally those in the membership of this visible organization who have no knowledge of grace, and are not the elect of God. In the third epistle of John we find the apostle writing to a church in which there was a member by the name of Diotrephes. Read what John says about this man: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if 1 come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them

out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." This Diotrephes was doing evil in this church to which John wrote, He that doeth evil hath not seen God;therefore Diotrephes had not seen God, yet Diotrephes was a member of the visible organization of the church. This is by no means the only instance of this kind in the New Testament, but enough to show that simply being a member of an Old School Baptist Church is not a sure passport into the favor of God. There are many of God's elect who never heard of the name Old School Baptist, and do not know what the name represents. Doubtless there are many who never even heard the name "Jesus," but have the substance of Jesus within them, and then, too, there have been occasions when one of the nonelect has crept into the visible church. So, you see, a mere name is no guarantee of safety; the substance of Christ himself in the soul is the very essence of true religion. "They went out from us, but they were not of u; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." – 1 John ii. 19. This is enough to prove that the visible organization of the church has stood in need of being purged from the days of the apostles until now, and that which made the purging inevitable was the presence in this visible organization of such as God knew did not belong there. Now certainly the brethren must have been deceived when they admitted these into membership with them. They certainly must have thought they saw something in those impostors that caused them to be willing to receive them as members among them. Here was deception of the very elect certainly. But this deception, though it bring numerous ills in its wake, will eventually turn out to be for the good of the church and for the glory of God. It never can ultimately end in the destruction of a single child of God. Now the question that

brother Mayfield asks is: Is “the very elect” a special favored few, taken from among the elect, while the greater numbers of the election of grace are left to be deceived and are led in the broad way to destruction “I From what we have already said it will be seen that our answer is, No. “The very elect” means all God’s elect, whether in the church militant or not. All, whether in the visible organization or out of it, are possible of deception, unless kept from it by the gift of spiritual discernment. The safety of every one of the elect, wherever they may be, is alone in grace. Mere intellectual ability or sharpened reason, mere human prudence or carefulness, will not guarantee the safety of any child of God against deceit. Sometimes we have heard brethren say that they were not afraid to attend Arminian meetings, for they were not afraid of being contaminated with what they might hear there. Such absolute certainty looks as though one had a lot of confidence in his ability to stand. For ourself, we had rather not play with fire. We might possibly get burnt. When Paul was shipwrecked on the island of Melita, and while he was warming himself by the fire kindled by sticks which his own hand had gathered, a viper came out of the heat and fastened on his hand and he shook it off into the fire and felt no harm; but there is vast difference between our voluntarily taking up a viper and having one fasten itself upon us uninvited. In the latter case one might feel that God would protect him, but we have no right to expect God to ward off the results of our own foolhardiness in voluntarily running into danger. We understand brother Mayfield to want to know if the words, “the very elect,” mean that there is a special little number signified which are meant by Jesus, instead of the whole number of the chosen of God. We have not thought that Jesus meant any such thing, but that he meant that even the elect themselves, notwithstanding they are the children of God, are in danger of being deceived by the false Christs and the false prophets that were to arise. Their only

safeguard against this evil is in being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Therefore, “Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.” This watchfulness against deceit is just as necessary to those who are in “the little flock” as to those that are scattered in Babylon. God has no preferred and common stock among his people. first of all, stock, whether common or preferred, is expected to yield dividends to its possessor, and not one of us will ever yield any returns to the Almighty who owns us. After all, We are unprofitable servants. If you had a servant working for you, and you never saw any returns from his service, you would dismiss him as being unprofitable, would you not? Well, just so are we unprofitable servants unto our God, for what can we render unto him that is not already his? The earth is his, and the fullness thereof, so that whatever we might take to give unto him is already his before it is ours. After all our service, have we made God any the richer, have we added anything to him whatever? Certainly not. Then are we unprofitable servants. So we cannot compare any of God’s people to preferred or common stock. Then, too, the terms, “common” and “preferred” signify two classes, the one excelling the other. Now, there are no classes in the church. We use the word “church” here in its broadest sense, as comprising all the people of God, not as simply meaning the visible organization. Among the people of God there are no classes, all are one in Christ. Whatever may be the social distinctions that exist between them in the World, whatever the circumstances of poverty or riches that divide their lot, all are one in Christ. All are alike sinners saved by grace, and no one has any room to boast over any other one. Jesus has no pets, no favorites, he loves them all alike. The wisdom that is from above is without partiality, so says James, and Jesus is the personal embodiment of that wisdom. So the expression, “the very elect,” does not simply mean the kernel in the nut,

but means the whole family of God, all his people. That many cunning things, many plausible schemes, great and far-sounding professions, are abroad in the land in this our day, is evident to any that watch the signs of the times. That our own mental perspicacity is not sufficient to make us errorproof is also very evident. May the good Lord, therefore, by his grace and by the training of his Spirit, enable us each and all to winnow the chaff from the wheat and to cast the filth away from us, that we be not deceived by the craft and cunning of men that lie in wait to deceive. L.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 1.
January 1, 1916

WHEN DIVIDING BECOMES GREAT GAIN

Indian Valley, Va.

Dear Brother,

I am inclosing you a letter Elder H. H. Lefferts wrote me. I enjoyed the letter and thought others would be glad to read it. If you think it is worth space in your paper you can publish it. I was with Elder Lefferts in Pennsylvania the 2nd Sunday in October. I asked him his views on the choosing of the seventy elders spoken of in the 11th chapter of Numbers. After he had returned home he wrote me the letter which I am inclosing.

Yours in faith and hope,
L. A. HARRIS

Leesburg, Va.

Dear Brother Harris

I trust that you made your bus connections on time, and that you had a safe journey to your home and that you found Sister Harris and others of your care, none the worse for your having been briefly away from them. Your visit was short, it seems almost a dream that you were here at all. Since your visit, I have bad some further reflections on the 11th of Numbers.

The Israelites complained against Moses because they had no flesh to eat, so the Lord gave them flesh in the form of abundant quails. So much of it, that it became offensive to them; they found that they did not want what they thought they wanted. It is often the case. We cry for this or that; but when the Lord grants it, we find it to be offensive to us and not what we wanted at all. It is bad when God's people murmur against Him; and we never do it but to our own confusion and chastening.

Moses was displeased, but not with the Lord, I think. He was displeased at the murmurings of the people over whom he had charge. But he did say to the Lord that the business of looking after this great [host of] people was too heavy a burden for him, and wished to die rather than any longer have so great responsibility. The Lord heard him and provided a remedy. So it is always. Whatever responsibility, no matter how heavy, He puts on us, He always makes a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. He tells us to cast our burdens on Him, and assures us He cares for us. He did this with Moses. Moses was so burdened that he desired rather to die; but death for him was not the way of escape at that time. Instead the Lord gave him 70 of the elders of Israel to help him. I do not understand that He took from Moses the spirit wholly; but that He took from Moses "of his spirit" and put it upon the 70. Moses was not thus deprived of the spirit that he had, but the 70 were each of them given of the same spirit which Moses had. By this distribution of the

spirit, without thereby making Moses have any the less of it, the ability to prophesy came upon the 70. Moses was thereby no less a prophet than he had been, but those who hitherto had not been able to prophesy were now enabled to prophesy along with Moses. In other words, Moses now had a companionship and fellowship in this matter which before he had been alone in.

Do we not see in this a type of Christ? It is said of Christ that He had the fulness of the Spirit without measure. After Christ ascended on high, He gave gifts unto men: for instance, the Spirit came upon the apostles in their measure, but not in the fulness which Christ alone has. By His ascension to the right hand of God, Christ has since made distribution of His Spirit among the saints of this gospel age by giving unto each a measure of His own Spirit. It is by this power alone, that any of us are enabled to serve the people of God in the gospel. In so doing, Christ is not thereby robbed: He still has the fulness of the Spirit and is not made any the poorer by His distribetion of gifts among us.

The sun shines on you, it shines on me, it shines on everybody; but because the sun shines on me, you are not thereby deprived of it; the people on the other side of the world are not deprived of sunshine because it shines on us here in America. The sun is not used up nor worn out because it has shone for 6,000 years. Neither is Christ in His fulness in any wise diminished because He bestows a measure of His Spirit on His servants to minister to His people in Christ's stead. Likewise Moses was not robbed nor diminished in the measure of the spirit which he had, because the Lord took "of his spirit" and put it upon the 70.

As for the two who remained in the camp and who also prophesied, Moses would not allow them to be silenced. He would have been glad if the whole people could have prophesied. So Paul in one of his letters to the churches, tells

us not to “despise prophesyings.” Let us acknowledge the truth, no matter who preaches it. We are not to believe all we hear because this or that man says it; yet we are to prove all things and hold fast only that which is good, - that is, that which conforms to the scriptures and to the experience of the saints. Let us test any man’s prophesyings by the word of God and by the work of the Word in our hearts; and if he speaks according to this word, then let us rejoice as Moses did, whether the man who prophesies belongs in the sanctuary or somewhere out in the camp.

I give you this for what it is worth. You are free to use it as you like. Any views I may have belong to the whole household and are not my private property. The Lord be with you.

Yours in gospel bonds,
H. H. LEFFERTS

Old Faith Contender, Vol. 20, No. 12